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Dungeons & Dragons

CHINA MIÉVILLE SUPER-SPECTACULAR

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF PERDIDO STREET STATION AND THE SCAR

dragon®

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30 YEARS OF dragon

FROM THE WORLD OF PERDIDO STREET STATION

8 DEADLY MONSTERS

4 PC RACES

1 POSSIBLE SWORD

DENIZENS OF THE ISLE OF DREAD

PLUS: CUSTOM WARFORGED & UNDEAD ABOMINATIONS

ECOLOGY OF THE YRTHAK

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Dragon

VOL. XXXI NUMBER 9

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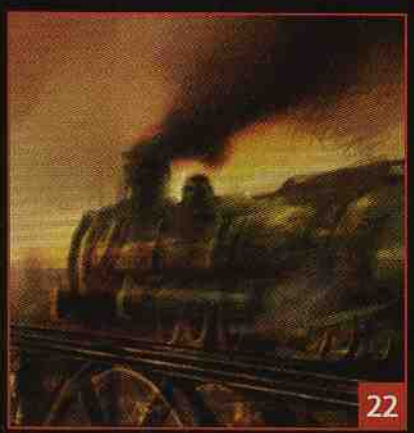

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A NEW WORLD AWAITS

When I first picked up China Miéville's *Perdido Street Station*, I'd fallen into a fantasy slump. After a succession of mediocre thousand-page airport novels that seemed to regurgitate the same tropes and plots I'd already read a million times, I'd begun to despair for the state of the genre as a whole. Was all fantasy essentially the same? Did every sword and sorcery book feature a youthful "chosen one" who narrowly escapes a raid on his village to join a rag-tag band of elves and dwarves on a quest to save the world from a Nasty Evil? Did the genre have anything new to offer my imagination and, for that matter, my DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaigns?

A good friend—one of dozens of internet contacts I've never met in person yet trust innately—suggested I give Miéville's new novel a try, citing it as one of the most imaginative pieces of fiction—fantasy or otherwise—he'd read in recent memory. Given that this friend was also the one who turned me on to Jack Vance, I was sure to take his recommendation seriously.

Only a few pages in, I knew I had found what I'd been looking for. With its Victorian cityscapes, baroque language, and characters with moral depth and complexity, I discovered in *Perdido Street Station* a key to a much larger fantastic landscape. Filled with decadent monsters and subtle magic, the book was surely fantastic in nature, but it was also altogether different. Its protagonists were ordinary people: fat scientists, conflicted artists, exiled outsiders. Certainly the monsters would be at home in a D&D campaign, but Miéville's city had trains and electricity and modern politics... it was just what I'd been looking for in a fantasy novel, but I began to wonder if it was a good fit for gaming.

Then, something funny happened. Late in the novel, the protagonists found themselves on an unlikely raid and requiring additional muscle. I'll let the book describe the men and women they hired:

"They were immediately and absolutely recognizable as adventurers... A few performed useful services: research, cartography, and the like. Most were nothing but tomb raiders. They were scum who died violent deaths, hanging on to a certain cachet among the impressionable through their undeniable bravery and their occasionally impressive exploits."

Right there it hit me. He's not just talking about adventurers, I thought to myself, but specifically of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventurers. Sure, the description was decidedly one-sided and a bit of a jab, but it was delivered with the skill of one who knows exactly where to aim. China Miéville, I discovered there and then, was a gamer.

It made perfect sense. New Crobuzon, the metropolis at the heart of *Perdido Street Station*, was as vibrant a character as any in the book, conveying a sense of place more strongly than perhaps anything I had ever read. Absent the plot, the novel seemed almost like an RPG sourcebook at times, with details included that only a game master might think up to add a sense of immersive realism to his locale. And here, where the action kicked into overdrive, was a team of adventurers that might have stepped right out of the *Tomb of Horrors*.

If a gang of D&D adventurers could fit snugly within New Crobuzon, New Crobuzon could definitely fit in a D&D campaign. More importantly, Miéville's willingness to contravene boring genre conventions could serve as a creative kick-start for a DM who had fallen into a rut, as it's now been doing for me ever since I first read *Perdido Street Station* years ago.

This month, DRAGON offers a full-scale look at the imaginative world of China Miéville in a feature that has been more than a year in the making. With the input, support, and approval of Miéville himself, we present for the first time official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules for the creatures, races, and technology of China's world. Use it to create your own New Crobuzon adventures or use it piecemeal to enhance your existing campaigns.

And for God's sake read *Perdido Street Station*. It may just change the way you think about D&D—and fantasy itself—forever.

ERIK

Erik Mona
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SCALE MAIL

Tell us what you think of this issue. Send an email to **scalemail@paizo.com**. Please include your name, city, and state.

WASTED SPACE

Hi guys. First off, I've been a loyal subscriber of *Dragon* for nearly ten years and, until last year, a prolific contributor on the official Wizards of the Coast D&D forums as MinusInnocence. Recently, a friend of mine started his own D&D website and for the past five months I've been submitting reviews there of your esteemed publication. Of course the comics at the end of each issue are always a welcome treat but among my favorite articles are "Ecology of...," "Demonomicon of Iggwilv," and "Core Beliefs."

Sadly, the latest installment is not positive. If there's one bad thing I've said about *Dragon* in my reviews it's that in your attempts to please the myriad groups of gamers out there (I'm thinking specifically of Eberron and Forgotten Realms fans), you often fail to find the center. I know it's difficult to accommodate so many different camps in the D&D world; I keenly remember the bloated corpse of TSR collapsing under its own weight as all the different campaign settings and supplements failed to generate enough money to justify their publication. I just think there are a lot of people who don't necessarily play published adventures and certainly don't appreciate campaign-specific material each month. There was a time a few years ago when the occasional short story or article by Ed Greenwood rubbed some people the wrong way, but it wasn't something that happened every month and, anyway, submissions of that caliber are easy to sift through for inspiration for just about any creative DM.

Now, however, it's impossible to get away from. To give you a few examples, I even advised people not to buy issue #349 because I didn't think they needed to pay cover price for eight pages of slightly cheesy game mechanics on bows and crossbows. Anyway, by Eric Cagle's own admission, it was a compilation of material from a bunch of other supplements; so really what you're telling us is that you think it's ok to sacrifice precious space from your already sparse ninety-eight pages for stuff we already have access to. I also didn't appreciate the gargantuan Forgotten Realms article on the Endless Waste: while it was superbly written and the map was greatly appreciated, a sidebar mentioned there is also a web enhancement on the Wizards of the Coast site. Why not just post all of this up there and save 13 pages?

That said, I still value my subscription and think you've done a bang-up job in recent months, and for my part I'm trying to recruit more people to buy your magazine because overall, I think *Dragon* has blossomed under Paizo's stewardship. It's just that I think it's a mistake to alienate the mainstream: maybe you could have one issue every year devoted entirely to each of the big campaign settings? February could be Eberron Month, for example. And regarding the Savage Tide Adventure Path: not everyone subscribes to both *Dragon* and *Dungeon*. I don't, and I'm a DM. So I was thinking you could just double the space allotted for the adventure in each issue of *Dungeon* to allow for "Savage Tidings." It leaves it all in one easy to find location and doesn't clutter up the pages of this magazine with stuff most of us won't use anyway.

Michael Mallon
Houston, TX

Thanks for the thoughts, Michael. As you suggest, we are telling you that we think a compilation of all existing official material on bows and crossbows is worth the eight pages in Dragon #349, just as we thought the pole arms presented over seven pages in issue #331 was a good use of space as well. Looking at my straining shelf, I count sixty-two hardcovers for the current edition of the game, and I have even had to purge a few of the older ones to make room for the new stuff. That's a crushing amount of game material, and no DM can really be expected to own all of it. Our "Comprehensive Guide" series is meant to compile the most relevant and useful information from all those books into a simple resource for players and DMs, which we think definitely justifies the space.

As for campaign-specific articles, that's a very difficult balancing act. When we print "too few" campaign setting articles, we get letters. When we print "too many," we get letters. Suffice it to say that D&D fans come to the game for lots of different reasons, and for a large percentage, setting is king. We try to make our setting-specific articles applicable to campaigns that don't use the setting in question and we will keep trying to

DAWN OF WAR CONTEST

All of us here at *Dragon* would like to congratulate Sam Van Tilborg of Paris, Ontario Canada on winning last October's Dawn of War contest.

Thanks to Sam, Relic Entertainment, THQ, Games Workshop, Nvida, and the dozens of aspiring generals who made the contest a success. Check back here next month for more to win with an all new give away!

FROM CHINA TO UN LUN DUN

While the majority of this issue focuses on the world and inhabitants of Bas-Lag, *Perdido Street Station*, *The Scar*, and *Iron Council* are by no means the extent nor end of China Miéville's exploration into other worlds. With his sixth novel, *Un Lun Dun*, Miéville departs Bas-Lag for a bizarre city lurking just behind the London of the real world. When two young girls wander into this realm of living words, strange characters, and familiar creatures turned monsters, they find a place awaiting the fullfillment of a prophecy that might finally be coming true. Written with young readers in mind and featuring artwork by the author, *Un Lun Dun* releases this February from Del Rey.

improve, but don't expect campaign setting articles to go away in the future.

YEESSS!!

I just received #350 in the mail, and I must say I am really impressed with this one. The articles on magic pollution and "Creatures of Corruption" were awesome, and I will definitely be incorporating elements of both into my bi-weekly EBERRON game. Not being a big FR fan, I was pleasantly surprised with the planetouched, as they are easily slotted into other campaign settings, and I've been waiting for an eladrin planetouched since second edition's PLANESCAPE campaign setting! Also, a monster Ecology from a source other than the first *Monster Manual*? NICE. In a game with House Cannith playing a prominent role in the overarching plot, an article on the clockwork horror makes me very happy! Also, I think one of my favorite Spellcraft articles ever graced your pages this month, though I wish there had been more. More chronomancy and chronopsionics please! Overall, this was a really good DRAGON, despite not having my favorite kind of content... EBERRON-specific! But I see from the First Watch section that will be remedied next month. All I can say is, YES, YES, YEESSS!!

Dave the Brave
Via Email

Dave the Brave, meet Michael Mallon. Mike, Dave the Brave.

FR IDEAS

I'm a long-time player of DUNGEON & DRAGONS and a HUGE fan of the FORGOTTEN REALMS. I'm very excited about the new monthly FORGOTTEN REALMS articles announced in issue #351. I would love to see some in-depth, Volo-style coverage of the lower Delembiyr region including Llorkh, Loudwater, and Secomber, the fledgling elven nation starting in the old Stronghold of the Nine, and last but not least some Halruuan locales. An article based on the Aurora's Whole Realms Catalog Trading Coaster and its contacts and interactions with local folks and its enemies would be great as well. Whatever the locale, please keep those Realms articles flowing!

Steve Parlin
Columbus, Ohio

We have quite a collection of FORGOTTEN REALMS and EBERRON monthly articles on tap, and we eagerly await reader response and suggestions. I'll pass along your list to our authors, Steve, and you might just end up seeing a few "special requests" in future months. In the meantime, swing by our message boards at ***paizo.com*** *and tell us what you think of the new columns. We're always eager to hear your thoughts and criticisms. —Erik Mona*

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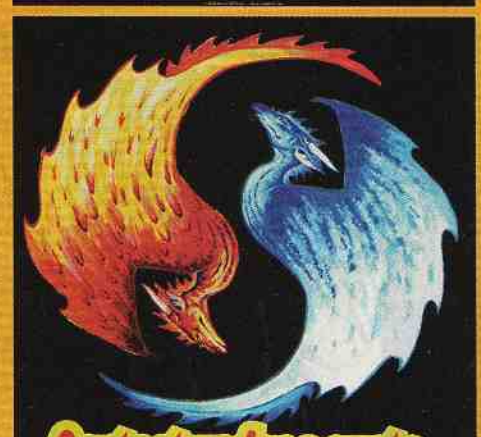

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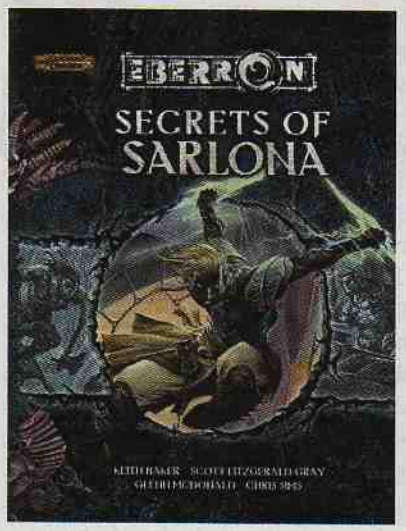
NEW RELEASES

Are your dungeons deadly enough? Make sure they are with *Dungeonscape*, the newest entry in Wizards of the Coast's environmental series with a focus on making your location-based adventures as unique and deadly as possible. DRAGON Managing Editor Jason Bulmahn and *The Order of the Stick* creator Rich Burlew provide DMs with new ways to snare players in either custom dungeons or in pre-made models. New terrain and obstacle details, types of traps, and dungeon-dwelling creatures, along with prestige classes and dungeon-delving tips and tricks make the book as useful to players as it is to DMs.



Secrets of Sarlona illuminates the history, conflicts, peoples, and threats of Sarlona, the domain of EBERRON's enigmatic inspired. With campaign ideas for DMs and character details for PCs, Keith Baker, Scott Fitzgerald Grey, Glenn McDonald, and Chris Sims reveal Sarlona's varied cultures, exploring its unique psionics and martial arts with special detail. Keith Baker, creator of the EBERRON campaign setting, says *Secrets of Sarlona* has "something for everybody—mysterious psionics, ancient civilizations, and strange magic." In addition, *Secrets of Sarlona* reveals mysteries of the world's past that shake the entire campaign setting.

The start of a new three-part series, *Barrow of the Forgotten King* takes PCs into the worm-eaten depths of a crumbling, undead-haunted catacomb to face the ancient horrors waking within. Meant to challenge characters from 2nd to 5th levels, the adventure utilizes the new easy-to-run encounter format and uses a mix of classic D&D beasts and new monsters, all of which have their own DUNGEONS & DRAGONS *Miniatures* figures to ease their use in play. Designer Ed Stark explains that "each encounter ties into the adventure, but each is self-contained and has all the rules and even some hints for running the scene."

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON #353

DEMONOMICON OF IGGWILV: MALCANTHET

by James Jacobs

Taste the sweetest corruption of the Abyss. Malcanthet, Queen of the Succubi, seduces mortals to indulge their lustful and hedonistic whims, then sacrifice themselves within her fiendish embrace.

FROM BEYOND THE REALMS

by Thomas Costas

Six new outsiders from the FORGOTTEN REALMS's unique cosmology wreak their wills upon the mortals of Toril.

THE PRINCES OF ELEMENTAL GOOD

by Kevin Baase and Eric Jansing

Seek the aid of the Elemental Planes's goodly archomentals. Ben Hadar, Chan, Sunnis, and Zaaman Rul oppose the wicked plots and wanton destruction of the Princes of Elemental Evil.

PLUS!

The Ecology of the Keeper, Dragonmarks, Class Acts, Scale Mail, Sage Advice, Savage Tidings, and comics, including *The Order of the Stick* and more!

reported by Shelly Baur, William L. Christensen, Cosmo Eisele, and Mike L. Fiegel

GIANTS OF MIDDLE EARTH

Aside from buying your own hobbit, Gentle Giant Ltd. (**gentlegiantltd.com**) gets you as close as you can to owning a piece of Middle Earth, releasing the first of many busts and figurines based on characters from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

"Gentle Giant Studios was actually on set for all three movies, scanning the actors and props for use in prototyping products," said Amanda Burns of Gentle Giant. "We have in-house sculptors and painters who then add the fine detail to create the final product."

The first busts in the series are the Strider and Ringwraith Ringbearer busts, each 1/6 scale figure standing 7.5 inches high and featuring secret compartments in the base to keep your own rings safe. Following on their heels are the Gandalf and Balrog mini busts, both possessed of a unique "magical" light-up feature.

Also featured in the Lord of the Rings line are stylized Animaquette figurines of Saruman and Gandalf, inspired by WETA and New Line's concept drawings for the films.

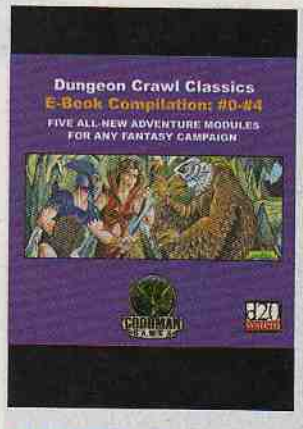
A FIRST LOOK AT UNHALLOWED

The thirteenth set of *Dungeons & Dragons Miniatures, Unhallowed,* unleashes the dead and worse. These three figures are but a sneak peek of the heroes and horrors releasing next month.

Phalanx Soldier

Beholder Lich

Ogre Executioner

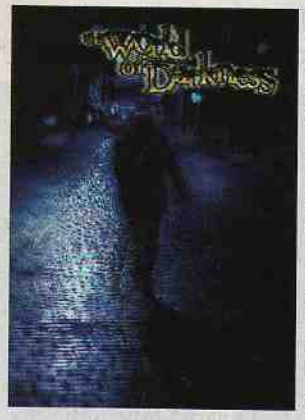


CLASSICAL CD

Goodman Games (**goodmangames.com**) releases the first compilation CD of the popular Dungeon Crawl Classics series of old-school adventures this month. "This CD compilation is a way to bring some of [the] online sales back to game stores," said Joseph Goodman, President of Goodman Games. The CD includes the first five Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures, beginning with adventure #0, *Legends are Made, not Born*, and ending with adventure #4, *Bloody Jack's Gold*. Future releases planned for later this year will feature four to five modules each.

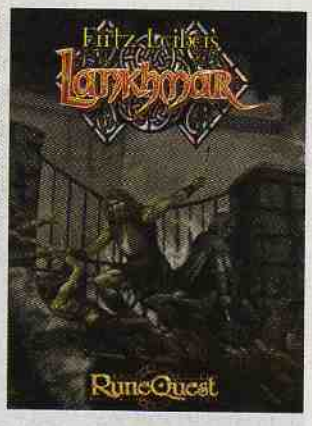
COSMIC CUTENESS

Dreamland Toyworks and cartoonist John Kovalic have teamed up to release My Little Cthulhu. This cute rendition of the elder god comes packaged with two victims that pull apart to reveal blood-red cores. "My Little Cthulhu was a dream project," said John Kovalic, "as it played directly to my strengths: mixing cute and evil. I don't think I've ever been happier with someone transforming my cartoons into full-fledged 3D glory, and I'm working on a couple of My Little Cthulhu comic strips to augment the line." My Little Cthulhu (**dreamlandtoyworks.com**) releases this month.



WHITE WOLF ONLINE?

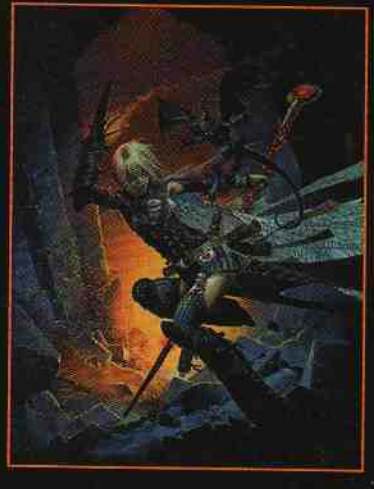
White Wolf has merged with Gaming Industry innovators CCP, creators of *EVE Online*, "the world's largest gaming universe." "CCP brings industry-leading technical expertise and online game development experience to us," said Mike Tinney, White Wolf's President. "Together, we will create the industry's most innovative games." While White Wolf will continue its pen-and-paper RPG offerings, the merger has reportedly already started the gears grinding on a World of Darkness online roleplaying game. You can read more about what's in store for White Wolf at **white-wolf.com**.



LANKHMAR REVISTED

Return to the City of Seven Score Thousand Smokes in Mongoose Publishing's (**mongoosepublishing.com**) *Lankhmar* campaign setting, for use with the new edition of the *RuneQuest* RPG. The 160-page hardcover includes everything needed to walk in the footsteps of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, with faithful descriptions of the entire city and all its factions. "My plan from the outset was to invent as little as possible and be faithful to the source material," said author Aaron Dembski-Bowden. "If it's in the Lankhmar books, it's in *RuneQuest Lankhmar*, too. If it ain't, then it ain't."

THIS MONTH IN DUNGEON #143



RIDING THE RAIL

by Christopher Wissel

Defend a lightning rail being used to transport a monolith hauled from the mysterious depths of Xen'drik. An EBERRON adventure for 5th-level characters.

TIDES OF DREAD

by Stephen S. Greer and Gary Holian

The PCs learn that the assault on Farshore was but a prelude of things to come. To prepare the colony they must draw upon all the resources of the Isle of Dread. A Savage Tide Adventure Path scenario for 9th-level characters.

BACKDROP: FARSHORE

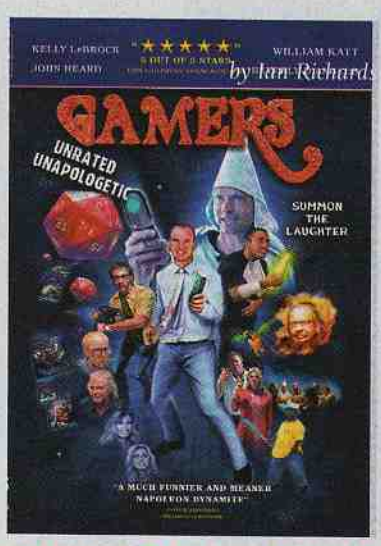
by Stephen S. Greer and Gary Holian

The burgeoning colony of Farshore needs your help if it's going to survive the perils of the Isle of Dread. Learn about the history, residents, and dangers of this determined port town.

MASK OF DIAMOND TEARS

by Nicolas Logue

The PCs are called upon to investigate the theft of a strange artifact and must face a deadly adversary indeed—themselves! A D&D adventure for 13th-level characters.

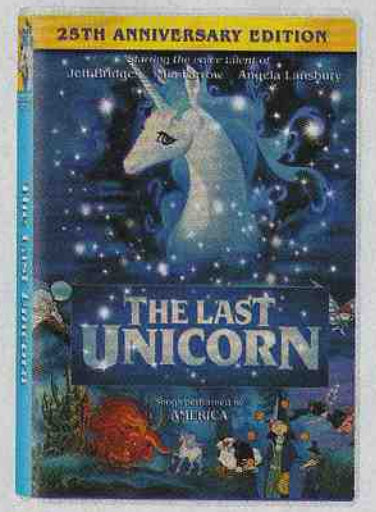


GAMERS ON THE SILVER SCREEN

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS references are always working their way into popular culture, but it's not too often that entire movies are dedicated to pure RPG geekiness. Recently, two new DVDs have focused on the lives and loves of gamers. First, *Gamers* (**buygamers.com**) details the lives of a group of gamer friends who are trying to break the world record for logging over 74,558 hours of roleplaying. Meanwhile, the gamers of *Geekin'* (**geekinmovie.com**) fear that their game hangs in the balance after the presence of a attractive girl threatens to pit gamer against gamer. Both films are on sale now.

DEITIES AND DEMAGOGUES

The Old Ones are coming. Such is the encroaching horror behind *Cthulhu Tales* and *Cthulhu Rising*, a compilation of squamous tales and a new series, respectively, from Boom! Studios, both based on the maddening works of H.P. Lovecraft. From the same darkness also comes *Damnation Crusade*, a bloody series set in the war-torn galaxy of *Warhammer 40,000*. After a number of delays, volume 1 of the worlds-spanning adventure of Yoshitaka Amano (*Sandman, Vampire Hunter D*), *Hero* is finally available too, complete with an introduction by Neil Gaiman. Check out all three series at **boom-studios.com.**



THE LAST UNICORN

Peter S. Beagle's cult fantasy classic returns to DVD this month with The Last Unicorn 25th Anniversary DVD. Featuring the voice talents of Rene Auberjonois, Mia Farrow, Angela Lansbury, and Christopher Lee, this widescreen release promises better video and audio quality than the 2004 edition. Despite the movie's popularity, though, legal entanglements have prevented the book's author from ever receiving compensation for his involvement. Colan Press (**conlanpress.com**), however, is donating half of their profit from the DVD's sale directly to Beagle to fund his future projects.

RPGA REPORT *by Ian Richards*

For years, Winter Fantasy has been the ultimate game festival for the hardest of hardcore D&D fans: Four days of gaming, RPGA events, celebrity panels, and announcements of the biggest products and events to hit in the coming year. Yet, if you haven't already been to Winter Fantasy, there's a good chance that you don't know much about what goes on there, and just hearing the name doesn't tell you a lot more. This year, though, all that's changing.

We here at the RPGA and Wizards of the Coast are reimagining Winter Fantasy. We wanted to host an event where we could show fans what's in store for the year, celebrate D&D with our most invested players, and further reward RPGA members for all their dedication and endless support. We also like the idea of giving our most devoted fans and attendees the inside scoop on RPGA, Wizards of the Coast, and gaming industry news and events before anyone else.

Thus, this month, Winter Fantasy becomes D&D Experience.

D&D Experience offers all the events and insider info of Winter Fantasy and more. Right from the start, the name tells everyone exactly what type of show it is. Along with special announcements, seminars, and DUNGEONS & DRAGONS R&D and brand presentations, we're offering more games of D&D and *D&D Miniatures* than it's possible to play in four days. As someone once said to me... "D&D is about choices... What class? What race? What feats? What skills to take?" D&D Experience will be just like that. With so much going on, the choices will be about what you can attend—whether you should grab some sleep or work in one more game.

D&D Experience takes place at the Hyatt Regency hotel in Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia, from February 15th to the 18th. To find out all there is to know about D&D Experience and this year's events, check out **wizards.com/rpga.**

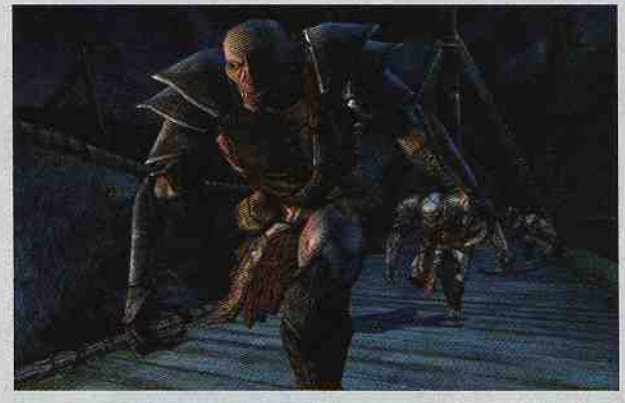
If you're serious about D&D you need to be at D&D Experience!

THE LORD OF THE RINGS ONLINE

Turbine, creators of *Asheron's Call* and *Dungeons & Dragons Online*, have their sights set on the top with *The Lord of the Rings Online: Shadows of Angmar*, the first MMORPG to let players adventure in the original epic fantasy world of J.R.R. Tolkien.

This first chapter in *The Lord of the Rings Online* saga focuses on Eriador and the evil done by the Witch-King of Angmar. Players deal with what the Fellowship of the Nine left behind, occasionally interacting with characters like Gandalf and Strider. The size and variety "puts LotRO in the top two MMORPGS out there," said Turbine CEO Jeff Anderson.

For a chance to try out *The Lord of the Rings Online's* before its release later this year, check out **lotro.turbine.com** for information on their open beta test, beginning this month.



LAIR

Strap on your riding gear and mount up on your very own dragon in *Lair*, from Factor 5 and Sony Entertainment, for the *Playstation 3*.

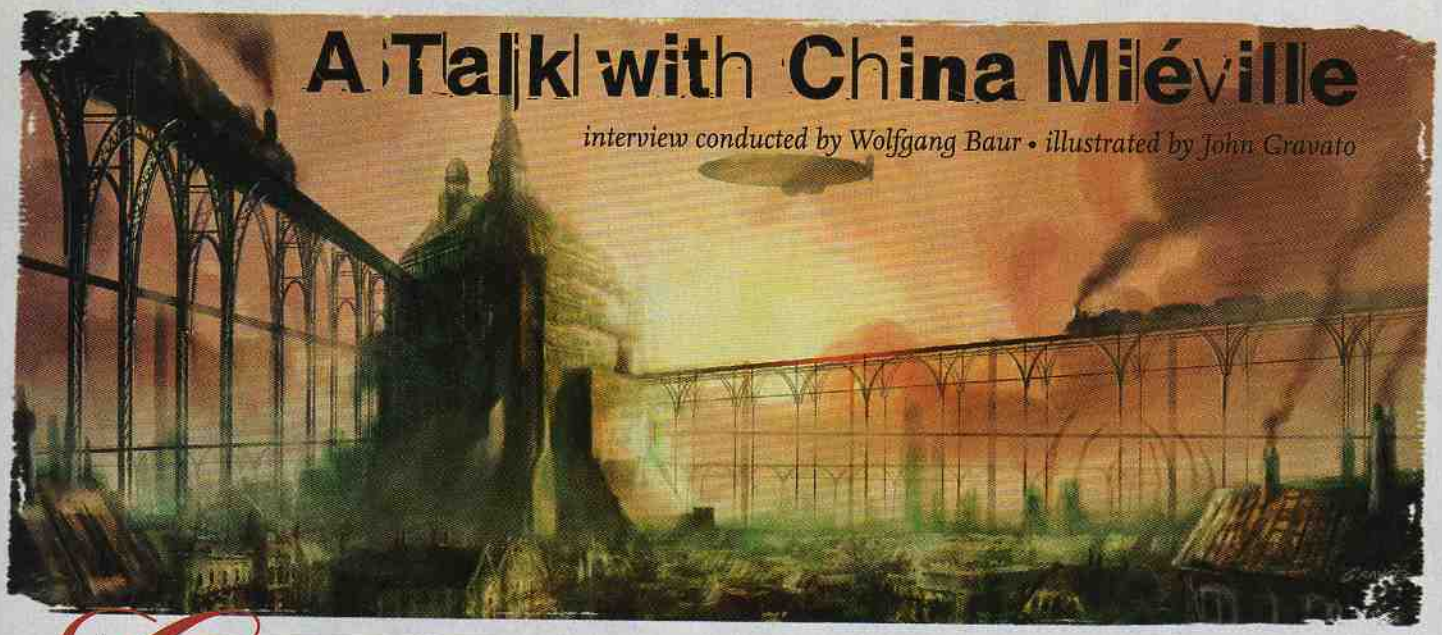
Utilizing the PS3's motion-sensitive SIXAXIS controller, you control your dragon in tooth-and-fang air-to-air combat with other dragons and scour armies of land-bound enemies with your flaming breath. Aside from the standard fire-breathing dragons, though, you'll also have the opportunity to take the reigns of ice and dark dragons, using their abilities to battle legions of monstrous foes. When your dragon is running low on health, you can even nip down to the ground forces and pick up a bite to eat from among the enemy's troops. You can also perform feats like leaping onto your opponent's dragon, knocking off the rider, then slaying the dragon itself.

Lair releases in Spring of this year.

RUNAGATE RAMPANT

A Talk with China Miéville

interview conducted by Wolfgang Baur • illustrated by John Gravato



China Miéville gets roleplayers, because he was one for years, and he gets worldbuilding in the broad style because of his roleplaying background. But his novels and his characters are anything but standard fantasy. Filled with exotic races, modern attitudes, as well as straightforward action, and with a creative energy the fantasy field hasn't seen since Moorcock and Le Guin, his work stands alone as the first wildly original fantasy novels of the 21st century.

Why read books that feature capitalist politics, industrial slums, and a dash of philosophy? Because they also feature Lovecraftian monsters, rich descriptions of fantastic people, and plenty of magic. China Miéville's world of Bas-Lag stretches the boundaries of what the fantasy genre can be well beyond a rag-tag group of elves and dwarves.

The next several articles in this issue provide an overview of China Miéville's strange creations in Dungeons & Dragons *terms as an aid to readers interested in making Miéville's engaging world of Bas-Lag come alive on their game tables.*

We recently sat with China for a brief interview about his engaging world, his novels, and his roleplaying past.

MIEVILLE ON GAMES AND MONSTERS

"My monster creation drive is a kind of prime thing. I've always loved all the fantastic elements, and I love creating fantastic worlds, but the monsters were always the prime draw for me. I think many people share that urge—you see the same mania for categorization in medieval bestiaries. Of all the sort of RPG supplements, it was always the monster manuals I loved most, and I think I just never grew out of it.

"[Of my own monsters], I've always had a soft spot for the inchmen of *Iron Council*, and I like the cactacae very much. The inchmen jump to mind because they're among the most grotesque. And if you want to count Remade as monsters, they really have to be above all else.

"I had the very early edition *Monster Manual*, and certain monsters for no particular reason just completely stuck in my head. I always felt a huge tug toward the xorn, and also the umber hulk. I never came up against either of these creatures in my roleplaying experiences, but they were the ones I always came back to. Also the golems, which feature quite a lot in *Iron Council* and are deliberately riffed on. In D&D terms, those were the ones.

"[Some of the adventurer mercenaries in *Perdido Street Station*] will do anything for gold and experience. It was tweaking [gamers], but it's extremely affectionate tweaking. I've seen people say online that I'm really anti-RPG, and I'm so startled when people say this. It couldn't be further from the truth. I don't happen to be a player these days, but this is my background, and I loved this stuff, and it was incredibly informative to me. I was quite aware of how formative this was to me in my world creation.

"With the adventurers, I was simply aware of that, and I was playfully and affectionately but critically saying 'You know, if adventurers really wandered around a coherent world with coherent societies and coherent politics, this is what they'd look like.' They go wandering into other people's barrows and steal the jewelry off their dead kings. This is not okay. They wander around looking for fights, they kill people at the drop of a hat... As I say, I was that soldier, I'm not casting aspersions. But it's a playful way of saying, 'this is what we play.'

"It's an affectionate critique.

"I don't play any games now, and I haven't played any for about eighteen

years... but in my early to mid teens I played a lot. I went from DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (AD&D), through to *Runequest* and *Call of Cthulhu*. And also *MERP: Middle Earth Roleplaying*. I never really particularly got on with the setting, but that was the favorite game of the people I was around, so I played a lot of that.

"For the most part, I tended to play the Chaosium engine, but that partly was just how the sticks fell. *Call of Cthulhu* was probably my overall favorite, and that also related to the monster thing. No one gives monsters like Lovecraft.

"Lovecraft is extremely important to me. He fascinates me because he physically changed the shape of the field that he was working in. You can think in terms of pre- and post-Lovecraft monsters. It's not that he didn't have precursors, but his radically new conception of the monstrous had absolutely nothing to do with folkloric traditions.

"His kind of pessimistic atheist supernature is a really exciting thing. Like most of Lovecraft's readers I'm very conscious of his flaws in literary terms and political terms. But I love the work and I find it endlessly inspiring."

TECHNOLOGY AND THE REMADE

"I've never been a fan of the view of technology which says that humanity should not meddle with certain things. That's a frighteningly closed-minded and conservative way of thinking about the world. Science and technology—in and of themselves—are neutral. But the problem is that they're never in and of themselves, they're always for interests and at the behest of interests.

"But I understand peoples' anxieties, because people are anxious about who is pushing that technology. The people who pay for that research, and the reasons it's being pushed—that is a completely legitimate set of concerns. Technology is fantastic, but what's done with it is often pretty awful.

"In *The Scar* and *Iron Council* I tried to create situations in which the Remade turn their own remakings to their advantage [so] that they stop being badges of dishonor and oppression. They become not only useful but also a kind of beauty."

GENRE AND THE FUTURE OF BAS-LAG

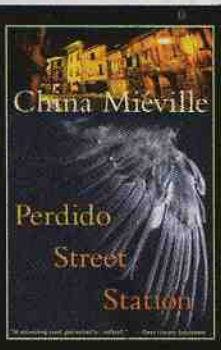
"There have been all kinds of traditions of the fantastic that don't fit what we might nowadays think of as the standard model. In the last 50 years, [the genre] has been shoehorned into a set of traditional shapes, which aren't intrinsic to the form at all. So when we say "the typical fantasy novel," that's only been the typical fantasy novel for a few decades. Nothing intrinsic about fantasy says it has to be feudal and elves and roving bands of adventurers. That's relatively speaking quite new. So what I and others are doing is reclaiming other traditions as much as creating something new.

"There's plenty of extremely good fantasy set in a feudal society, but I am more interested in modernity. Bas-Lag started out almost as a thought experiment. It was 'Let's do a fantasy society which is fantastic, which has magic, which has monsters, but which is urban rather than rural, which is capitalist rather than feudal, which is unsentimental—arguably too unsentimental—as opposed to sentimental.'

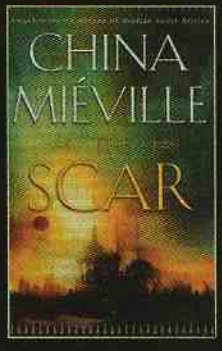
"The paradox is that if you do it that way you make the fantasy more realistic.

"The next Bas-Lag novel won't be for a little while. I will certainly be writing more set in that world, but I wanted to break after *Iron Council*. The response to *Iron Council* has really divided people much more than the other books. When I come back to that world, I want the dust to have settled. So it probably won't be for a couple of years. [But] I am thinking about it, and I have at least two different ideas which I'm currently intertwining into one.

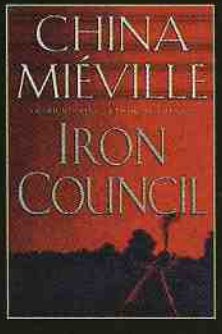
"I suspect I'll be coming back to Bas-Lag for the rest of my life. There are an infinite number of stories to be told there. I want to keep it reasonably fresh, which means trying something new each time. Inevitably, not all books are going to work for all people, and that's a shame, because you always want everyone to love every book. But I think a worse crime would be to always write the same book."



Perdido Street Station: A scientist who wants to harness crisis energy and prove his theories, a birdman who wants to fly again, an insectoid artisan, and a city that just wants a good night's sleep. A wildly inventive fantasy city and its inhabitants come alive in the first Bas-Lag novel.



The Scar: The ship-city of Armada sails toward an ancient empire's treasures, led by mad lovers, vampires, freed Remade, and the hostages taken from a thousand piracies.



Iron Council: Failed revolutionaries flee the city of New Crobuzon aboard a train in a story wildly unlike any other train novel ever. Mutants and cacotophic stains, parted lovers, wild golem magic, and adventures abound.

BAS-LAG GAZETTEER

by Wolfgang Baur • illustrated by John Gravato • cartography by Robert Lazzaretti

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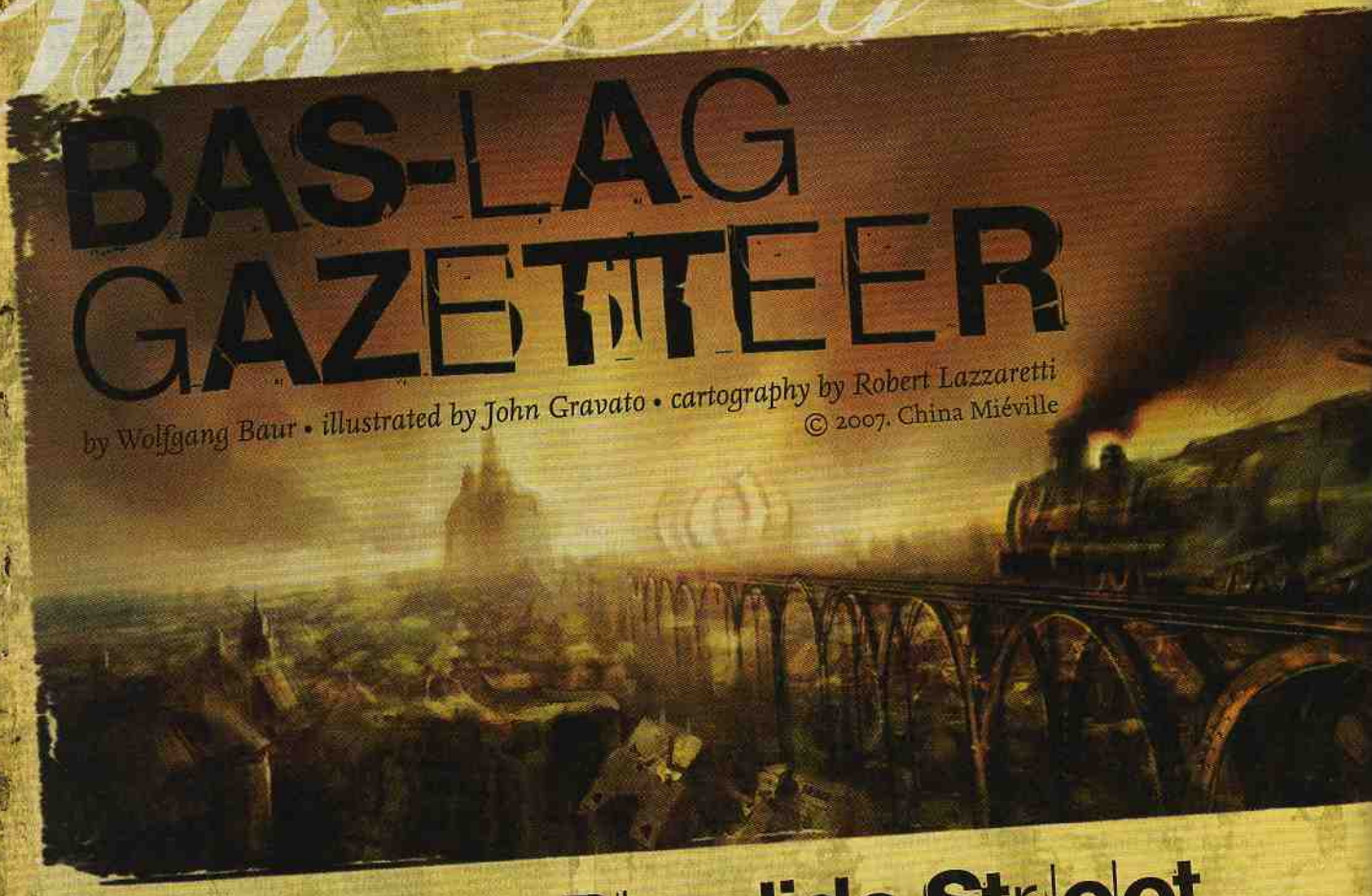

A Guide to Perdido Street Station & the World Beyond

Barges putter weirdly between fields, on canals hidden by banks of earth and vegetation. They go endlessly between the metropolis and the estates. They bring chymicals and fuel, stone and cement and luxuries to the country. They return to the city past acres of cultivation studded with hamlets, great houses, and mills, with sack upon sack of grain and meat.

The transport never stops. New Crobuzon is insatiable.

—The Scar

The world of Bas-Lag is enormous, a mass of continents slowly being stitched together through trade and industrial progress. New Crobuzon is home to one of the most advanced of its civilizations, but other city-states and empires—richer and wiser—have come and gone over the centuries, and New Crobuzon itself has suffered long periods of industrial retreat and collapse as well as eras of wild expansion. Here, then, are a traveler's impressions and warnings for both the city and the world around it.

NEW CROBUZON

The city of Crobuzon was founded roughly 1,800 years ago as a small village near the coast of Iron Bay at the outflow of the Gross Tar river, near where Tarmuth is now. It prospered and quickly became a favorite target of pirate attacks until, 100 years after its founding, one such raid burned Crobuzon to the ground.

The inhabitants pulled up stakes and moved to where the River Tar meets with the Canker, just a few miles upriver from its meeting with the sea. Although the people renamed it New Crobuzon, the dating system from the first settlement's founding on Iron Bay was retained. Over time, its hard-working citizens and hard-scheming mayors have extended its reach thousands of miles, and have built its manufactories into a vast, sprawling, industrial mess. The city-state has created great art and advanced sciences, funded rail travel and gliding aerostats, destroyed one of its rival cities and brought others to heel, and has made some of its merchants very, very wealthy indeed.

New Crobuzon now suffers the diseases of a proud industrial metropolis: alchemical wastes flow into the Gross Tar through the Brock Marsh, the crowds strain its streets and rails, and while its newer buildings tower ten and even twenty stories high, every mass of concrete, tar, and brick is rotting at the base. Many of its districts are slums, rebels and unions threaten the wealth of the overlords, and its citizens are barely held in check by the brutal militia.

Welcome to New Crobuzon, the greatest city-state of the world.

New Crobuzon, the Mercantile City

Ever since New Crobuzon won the first and second Pirate Wars against Suroch and the island cities, it has made its presence felt over more and more territory. It annexed outlying areas and established protectorates and a penal colony. The city commonly bullies smaller, weaker neighbors.

Unlike its lesser sisters, New Crobuzon is driven across the oceans by both mercantile and imperial ambitions. It fights and scrabbles to make itself felt far across the seas and deserts, and its colonies, armies, and trading interests extend hundreds and even thousands of miles. All these things converge along the banks of the rivers that lead to the sea where New Crobuzon made her fortune.

Boroughs, Sights, and Districts

New Crobuzon suffers from a remarkable lack of city planning. Open sewers flow through the slums, houses are built rather at random (certainly in the slums), and roads, street lighting, and transport are all fairly primitive by modern standards—but excellent by Victorian standards. This section describes typical districts in the city and points of interest rather than describing every district.

The Wealthy Districts

Wealth comes in several forms: money, power, knowledge, and influence. All of them can be found in the richest districts, which cluster near the center and northeast of the city.

Chnum: A district of merchants and factory-owners who command redstone manors full of servants and sleep on featherbeds, Chnum is a dull but very pleasant place. Its wide avenues and large houses are always watched both by the militia and by private guards, who protect their employers from everything from kidnapping to beggars.

The Crow: This fashionable commercial and shopping district is spread out around Perdido Street Station in a mix of broad streets and tangled alleys. Three main shopping streets—LeTissof Street, Concubek Pass, and Boulevard Dos Ghérou—radiate out from the station and BilSantum Plaza, at the heart of the district. During the day and early evening, they are always packed with carts, street vendors, buskers, and pedestrians. Many of them simply take in the sights along the thoroughfares, for all the world seems to bring its wares to the elegant shops to sell: fine tailoring, tropical produce, inlaid snuffboxes, children's golems, gaslight lamps, and feathery lace.

Old noble families that once lived here have long since fled for quieter districts, their homes converted to

New Crobuzon
Sink Line
Ruined Station
Rudewood
Gallmarch
Serpolet
Chimer's End
Chimer
River Tar
Verso Line
Low Falling Mud
Odner's Bridge
Fell Stop
Spatters
Lichford
Saint Jabber's Mound
Raven's Gate
Ketch Heath
Lich Sitting
Mandrake Bridge
Stentorius Bridge
Chitin Creek
Creekside
Gross Coil
Creek Slum
Smog Bend
Howl
Sangwine
Barrow
East Sink
Hadrach Bridge
Tar Wedge
Skulkford
Drud Crossing
Sobek
Croix
Salacus Fields
Kinken
Rim
Canker Wedge
Nabob Bridge
Sheck
Outer Crow
The Crow
North Crow
River Canker
Khadoh Bridge
The Glass House
Salacus Fields
Spit
Barrackham
Bazaar
Perdido Street Station
Dryside
Riverskin
Sly
Spit
Hearth
West Gidd
Flag Hill
Flyside
Cockscomb Bridge
Petty Coil
Brock Marsh
Gidd
Colin's End Crossing
Hog Leaving
Aspic
Saltpetre
Sheer
Griss Bridge
Barguest Bridge
East Gidd
Flag End
Hodd Line
Griss Twist
Danechi Bridge
Lud Fallow
Terminus
Trauka
Syriac
Syriac Rising
Rust Bridge
Fell Strack Island
Mafaton
Bonetown
Ludmead
Murkside
Sud Line
Sunter
Sedim Junction
New Crobuzon University
Chinum
Kelltree
Kelltree
Pelorus Fields
The Downs
Echomire
Mog
Saltbur
Syriac Well
Mog Hill
Dexter Line
Night Sump
Barley Bridge
Dog Fenn
Pincod
Dark Water
Stoneshell
Dog Fenn
Badside
Abrogate Green
Abrogate Green
Grand Calibre Bridge
River Gross Tar
W
S
N
E
0
3
Miles

New Crobuzon

New Crobuzon (metropolis): Conventional; AL LE; 7,000,000 brass shekels (equal to gp) limit; Assets 2,450,000,000 brass shekels; Population 3,510,000; Mixed (73% human, 10% vodyanoi, 8% khepri, 3% wyrmen, 2% cactacae, 2% Remade, 2% other, including hotchi and garuda).

Authority Figures: **Mayor Triesti**, LE male human expert 12 (Lord Mayor of New Crobuzon, leader of the Fat Sun party and the Urban Unity government); **Alessa Handsome**, LE female human fighter 10 (leader of the New Quill Party); **Jorge Sebash**, LN male human fighter 15 (Lord Captain of the Militia).

Important Characters: **Mr. Motley**, CE male chaos-touched Remade human rogue 14 (gangster lord of Bonetown); **Francine 2**, CN female khepri fighter 6/rogue 5 (gangster queen of Kinken); **Thumbs Listing**, LN male cactacae cleric 9 (Leader of the Glasshouse elders, high priest of Sanshad-in-Crobuzon); **Isaac Dan der Grimnebulin**, NG male human expert 8 (scientist, crisis engine inventor); **Feshejheltis**, N female vodyanoi rogue 4/sorcerer 3 (president of the Vodyanoi Stevedores' Guild); **Lucia der Belsevere**, LN female human sorcerer 7/loremaster 6 (Chancellor of the University of New Crobuzon); **Splits Rib**, CN male cactacae expert 10 (Guildmaster of the Swole Solar Merchant League); **Khoinesheril**, LN male vodyanoi aristocrat 2/rogue 7 (Harbormaster and Customs Collector); **Savage Peter**, NE human male fighter 5/rogue 3/blackguard 2 (gang lord of Spatters).

Notes: New Crobuzon is a city large enough to contain many cultures and hundreds of important characters. The list above is just a sampling.

two- and three-story shops. In the side streets and alleys stand the offices of lawyers and doctors, the dining halls of exclusive gentleman's clubs, actuaries, geothaumaturges, apothecaries, and well-heeled gambling halls. The people here are wealthy and know it, and the only pockets of poverty are those inhabited by the parasites of the rich: pickpockets, expensive escorts, fortunetellers, and palmists.

Flag Hill: A fine hill district with excellent views and enormous houses that back onto shared, gated gardens, Flag Hill has long been home to bankers and captains of industry. Until recently, its lower slopes included a number of "undesirable" sections, but that has changed.

In recent decades, its luxury housing has expanded as builders have bought out or driven away the small pockets of the poor and "unpleasantness" that once filled in sections of Flag Hill, and many older row homes are torn down to make way for edifices clad in stone rather than brick on the hill's lower slopes. Although it still lacks a bit of polish, it is a posh place of rising status for new money. Some snobs have taken to distinguishing "Old Flag Hill" near the top from "New Flag Hill" around the flanks.

Ludmead: Elegant architecture and the old money that goes with it are only half the story of Ludmead. The other half is the University of New Crobuzon, with its old brickwork and large halls surrounding a tree-lined green quadrangle in the heart of the old campus, sitting between Ludmead, Mafaton, and Saltbur. The Science Faculty, the Arts Faculty, the Engineering Faculty, the Language Faculty, and the Commerce Faculty all have their own buildings, each with a porter who makes sure that vagrants and others stay out of the classrooms and laboratories. The students are overwhelmingly male and human, but some xenians (non-humans) and women also attend.

Ludmead is also home of the Ludmead Station, a well-kept, neatly-tiled station on the Dexter line. A ring of cheap and noisy student taverns surrounds the university, and a good system of streetlights illuminates Ludmead. Walking there at night is quite safe.

Mog Hill and Mafaton: These are largely similar districts; wealthy but otherwise uninteresting. A few houses of their larger manors have dedicated mooring posts for aerostats or dirigibles.

Salacus Fields: A place of fashion and the fashionable, poets and pamphleteers, and the latest breed of junkies. Its residents delight in the scandalous and the outré, and the district is crowded with tea-houses and bars. Clothes here are bright and artistic, and it is a fine place for romance. The artists vary from the wealthiest, with their patrons and lucrative city contracts, to the conventionally successful. Many of the artists are xenians working with golem-magic (common among the vodyanoi) or sculptural gland-artists (best known among the khepri). Its reputation for dissendence and radical artistry is mostly just that at this point, however, as it draws in rich students and younger sons; the truly radical artists and pampleteers have decamped to Howl Barrow. Salacus Fields retains some weekender-chic and is gentrifying, much to the horror of its older residents.

Rails and Industry

Business and industry is scattered throughout the city, from the sweatshops of Dog Fenn to the savage industrial wastelands of Echomire and Smog Bend. The best-known working districts are Gross Coil, the docks of Kelltree (and to a lesser extent, Echomire), and the famous rails that meet at Perdido Street Station.

Although unions are illegal in New Crobuzon, the race-specific artisan guilds offer some protection to the workers. For the most part, though, industry has the whip hand.

Arrowhead Mines and Arrowhead House: Owned by the Penton's industrial concern, the Arrowhead Mines are miles outside the city proper, but their ore comes to its smelters every day by rail. A private line, carefully defended, runs from the mines to the city's edges, and

the whole complex is part of a large commercial cartel, rather shadowy and shifty, with connections and holdings in heavy industry, thickets of front-men and hollowed-out chartered firms. At heart, Arrowhead is a very large and powerful firm, run by the elder Josiah Penton for forty years until it passed on to his son, also named Josiah Penton.

The Pentons were deeply involved in the creation of torque bombs that destroyed Suroch during the Pirate Wars. They live in the Arrowhead mansion in the Mafaton district, a place said to conceal a literal fortress beneath its glittering façade. Some even say that a secret rail line runs from it to a secure boathouse on the Canker near Banguest Bridge. No proof of this exists, but the story is widely believed.

Griss Twist: For every industry, there must be dumping grounds. Griss Twist enjoyed a short-lived boom of small machinofacture decades ago—all noise, smells, and profit. But it also became the site of massive riverside dumping—at first clandestine, then open—creating a new landscape of rubble, garbage, and industrial offal, cartloads and bargeloads in steady successions. Today the Griss Twist landscape is one of fenced-in mounds of broken machines, rotting paper, mining slag, organic offal, and chymical detritus. Hills, valleys, and piles sorted by type and lagoons of liquid waste and chymical detritus all have their place. Most of the factories are long gone, but the dumps are eternal, and the winds from Iron Bay sometimes send a choking stench over the Tar into Petty Coil across the river.

A few factories still work at half or quarter-time, sorting, smelting, and sifting through the landscape of trash. The region is most famous now for the Militia's siege of the place, which is said to have destroyed a rogue golem or construct, a demonic army of constructs, or a sentient trash elemental. The details are vague, and few poke about in the dumps for answers.

Gross Coil: This district of soot and fumes is home to booming industry such as the Bleckly Refinery and many other firms. Factory workers crowd it every day, but in fact it and Skulkford are sitting on layers of older buildings. For hundreds of years these districts sunk into the mire, with new building appearing atop the old layers. The sewers here float through old houses, streets, and warehouses. New manufactories and workshops spring up constantly, and workers arrive on the Sink Line each day to fill them.

Kelltree: Between Rust Bridge and Barley Bridge and served by its own rail spur from the Dexter Line,

Badgers, Thaumaturges, and Alchemists

Traditional wizards and sorcerers do not exist in the world of New Crobuzon, but thaumaturges and alchemists certainly do. Alchemists create potions and other items, and might be well replicated by the artificers of EBERRON (see the *EBERRON Campaign Setting*); thaumaturges cast spells much like sorcerers, although the scope of their powers and the schools of magic known are very different.

Both thaumaturges and alchemists can acquire a familiar, which in New Crobuzon tradition is usually a badger, a creature believed to have some immunity to the dangerous harmonics of hidden sciences. These badgers carry messages and lists to the shops catering to their masters and are generally treated as respected servants. They cost the usual sums, have the standard hp and abilities, and grant their masters a +3 bonus on Knowledge (arcana) checks.

Kelltree is dominated by its large square docks. The channels are carved deep into the clay here to make new passageways for ships: primitive steamships, enormous sailing ships, and even submersibles carved from great nautili shells from civilizations of even greater ocean depths. The district is an important workplace for many of the city's vodyanoi stevedores, who live nearby along the water in Lichford and Gross Coil, and along the Tar in general. Both vodyanoi and human laborers load and unload the cargos that arrive daily.

The true terrain of Kelltree is not its land at all, but the undulating forest of hundreds of ships that anchor here in slips, basins, reservoirs, and canals built into the docklands. Cranes and stevedores never stop moving, the masts of tall ships smudge the skyline, and its warehouses are full to bursting. Barges and tugs often take the goods further upriver to Smog Bend and Gross Coil, or rails carry them throughout the city.

Perdido Street Station: The center of the city's rails and its skyrails, Perdido Street Station is a hub connecting the militia towers, the major city districts, and the seats of power. Its five enormous openings swallow the five main rail lines, and the buildings include various militia towers and turrets, workshops, torture chambers, shops, taverns, and even a small museum.

No maps of the station cover it all. Its architect is said to have gone mad from the strain of keeping the building going and functional. Others claim he was incarcerated by the militia to preserve state secrets, with tunnels and defenses known to only a few. Still others say that in the station he attempted to build a god to worship. Certainly, anyone who controls the station controls most travel through the city.

The city's five main lines are the Dexter, Head, Sink, Sud, and Verso lines, with more than two dozen stations. The Dexter line includes the Kelltree and Dog Fenn spurs. The Sink line is abandoned in the section leading into the Rude Wood.

Tarmuth: Although New Crobuzon itself is about 10 miles from the sea, Tarmuth serves it as a port just a few miles to its east. The reasons that New Crobuzon wasn't built directly on the coast are disputed, but Tarmuth is basically the city's port and controlled by Parliament and the great merchant houses. Many of the city's gentry and parliamentarians keep summer houses in the countryside nearby or along the shore of Iron Bay.

Ghettoes and Slums

While every rich district flaunts its wealth in its own special way, poor districts tend to show the same signs of poverty everywhere—although they are still quite distinguishable for natives. The slums are everywhere in the city, from the rotting bricks of Badside to the wreckage of Dog Fenn to the slumping hillside shanties of St. Jabber's Mound—which constantly threatens to slide into the next district down whenever a storm washes out the slopes. Echomire can at least boast about its docks and Flyside about its militia tower, but the slum-industrial khepri ghetto of Creekside and many others have nothing to recommend them. The following regions offer visitors at least one reason to visit.

Bonetown: Named after the Ribs that arch over it so prominently, Bonetown is a shabby place where nothing good lives. A syncretic mesh of industrialism and cross-bred architecture, urban scrubland, shantytowns, and abandoned docklands line the river shore, littered with thick-stemmed weeds. The crime lord Mr. Motley keeps his base of operations in Bonetown. Danechi's Bridge joins Bonetown to Brock Marsh across the Canker.

Dog Fenn: A place of markets with stolen goods, tired whores, and (its only real distinction) the last operating station on the rail line, named Dog Fenn

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Station. The doors to the station are rusted open and ticket takers rarely show up for work. The station has been abandoned to poverty, although trains still stop there. Dog Fenn is a hotbed of rebellions and illegal pamphleteering. Many believe the *Runagate Rampart*, an uncensored newspaper, might be printed here. Pamphleteers press papers into the hands of every passerby in many sections of Dog Fenn, and it is a frequent location of civic unrest of the shouting and rock-throwing kind. Rich landlords visit at their peril; poor folk are rarely molested.

By the time the rivers have flowed through New Crobuzon, their confluence—the Gross Tar—is thick with garbage, sewage, and refuse of all kinds. As a result, a few Dogg Fenn river-fishers use nets, weirs, and even dredges to eke a living from this flotsam.

Howl Barrow: This small slum is mostly known for its homosexual, transvestite, and theater community, a group that formed the Pretty Brigade. The Pretty Brigade fought boldly and effectively for the Collective after the return of the Iron Council to the city, but went to ground when the Collective fell. Since that time, filthy but cheap Howl Barrow has continued to attract the artists, writers, and radicals pushed out of Salecus Fields by ongoing gentrification. Many live destitute in their garrets or in tiny studios at the back of a hopeful gallery.

The Ribs: Ivory shards of a leviathan, these arching ribs of a fallen giant almost meet about two hundred feet above the ground. The land around them is unlucky; tools break, projects run away into the dust and dirt, nothing prospers. Despite all that, they make a useful landmark to the visitor: just look up, and if you see the ribs, you can orient yourself. The Ribs themselves are a bit of a draw for gawkers, so most residents here are hawkers, buskers, salespeople, and acrobats.

Sheck: So well-known for anti-xenian unrest that it has its own militia tower, Sheck is technically a step above the slums. It is separated from Kinken by a couple of small parks, and it is the first step out of poverty and into the petty bourgeois for many. Despite this, Sheck is an area that often supplies funds to the rebellions elsewhere, and many union organizers, journalists, and others who disturb the rich and powerful live here, close to their contacts. As such, right-wing reactionaries from Gross Coil, the Crow, and the Glasshouse, as well as Brock Marsh's bully-boys and organizers for the New Quill, all seem to have friends in Sheck. Xenians rarely visit Sheck any longer than they must.

Spatters: At the edge of Rudewood, this slum of desperate shacks is the garuda ghetto, the worst of the worst. Unlike other slums, it isn't a collapsed section of city buildings but a pure shanty town, built shack by shack from refuse and cast-offs. It is the home of Savage Peter, a gang-lord who is not so much respected as feared. He's fond of impaling his foes and letting them rot in the sun; his name conjures fear well beyond the district's borders. The garuda circling over the alleys and byways of Spatters are said to be Savage Peter's eyes; it's certainly true that little escapes his attention.

Special Districts and Xenian Ghettos

Some districts have a character all their own, based on the profession or species of the inhabitants. Three of the best-known are the Scientific Quarter of Brock Marsh, the Glasshouse of the city's cactacae, and the khepri's organicly-reshaped cells and shops. The vodyanoi live throughout the city, but always near water of some kind, even if it is just a well or fountain.

Brock Marsh: Brock Marsh is a triangular slice of the Old City low

ground wedged between the city's two rivers—the Canker and the Tar—as they meet and became Gross Tar; its location near Strack Island makes it important enough to rate a militia tower that anchors a short skyrail over to Strack Island.

Brock Marsh is also called the Scientific Quarter. Some of its denizens are scientists and thinkers, including physicists, chimerists, biophilosophers and teratologists, chymists, necrochymists, mathematicians, karcists and metallurgists, and vodyanoi shaman. If it's an obscure branch of an even more obscure form of knowledge, Brock Marsh is the place to find its practitioners. Its businesses include private libraries, book binders, herbalists, renting libraries, makers of glassware and copper tubing, scale and balance makers, and other artisans who cater to the scientific trade. Small hordes of badgers scamper through the streets, familiars by tradition to the learned, and waddle through special flaps in the store-fronts and doors of these shops.

The favored locales of the scientific class are pubs. The Dying Child on Umber Promenade is particularly popular and is run by Silchristcheck, a vodyanoi who rarely leaves his bath. Another favorite is the Moon's Daughters, an inn near Danechi's Bridge, which links Brock Marsh with Bonetown.

Dates

New Crobuzon's dating system is Anno Urbis, dating from the founding of the city, 1,779 years before the events of the novel *Perdido Street Station* and 1,806 before the events of *Iron Council*. Before the founding, dates are measured backwards in BNC, Before New Crobuzon. Only dates before the founding are noted as such.

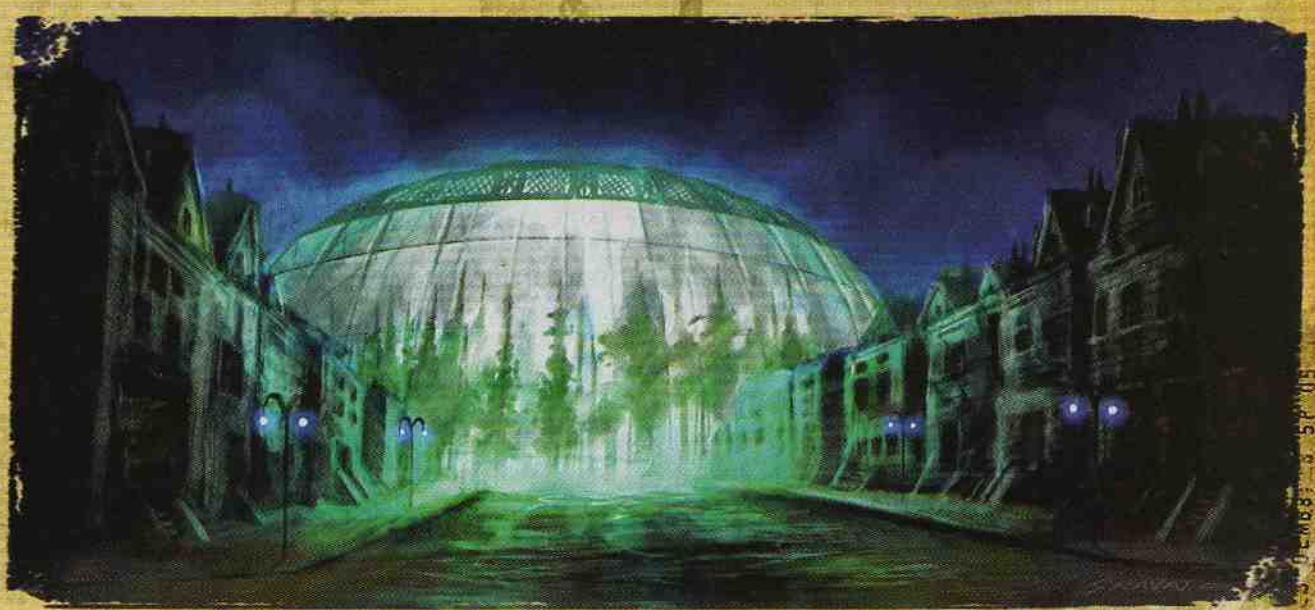
The Glasshouse: Built in the middle of the Riverskin district, this enormous hothouse is home to the city's cactacae. As its name suggests, it is an entirely enclosed glasshouse covering several city blocks and originally designed for human habitation. The glasshouse was built around some already existing streets, so they run right up to the wall, although they do not enter. The glass itself is usually opaque with steam and dirt. The air inside is much warmer and drier than outside, like the southern deserts that many cactacae favor. Dune eagles and other desert birds live entirely within the glass dome.

The Glasshouse has powerful fans for temperature regulation, a light source that heats and brightens the interior, and many buildings constructed in the traditional cactacae style. The most imposing is a large, red-stone step pyramid that serves a religious function known only to the cactacae, although some sort of sun worship seems likely. The pyramid terraces are overflowing with desert plants, and it is topped with a lensed heliochymical device that generates powerful rays of sunlight.

The Glasshouse entrances are always tightly guarded by strong, steady cactacae armed with rivebows and sharp eyes. It is off-limits to non-cactacae.

Kinken: The khepri have lived in Kinken for 700 years, since the first contact with the Bered Kai Nev continent, but they were very few in number until the Tragic Crossing. These days, khepri district houses ooze the white mucus of home-grubs. Although called grubs, they are actually beetles larger than rhinos and they reshape architecture with phlegm-cement to suit khepri standards, their little legs pushing as they eat their way through interiors. Home-grubs obey khepri handlers who tug and guide them to make the right renovations, using scent glands and special bridles.

The khepri, rather than the mayor, run Kinken semi-autonomously,



although no one admits to this state of affairs openly. The khepri institutions are nominally just mutual aid societies, each of them answerable to a moiety chief and a hive queen. In fact, these societies are just facades for the moieties or family clans themselves, some of which date back to the earliest days of khepri diaspora. The hive queens control the streets, arrest and punish wrongdoers, protect shopkeepers from xenian assault, and even levy tributes paid to them in addition to the city taxes. The militia only visits when it must; lawbreakers harbored in the ghetto are sometimes turned over to the militia after a back-channel request or kept under house arrest within Kinken itself.

Note that Kinken is a step up from the poorer khepri homes in Creekside.

Government and Militia

New Crobuzon is always in a state of flux between governments and in a state of uneasy truce between exploited workers and the crass overlords who beat rebellion back into the gutter. The instruments of state control are well-developed and tilt the balance of power in the interest of merchants, industrial and shipping interests, and landowners.

To vote in New Crobuzon, one must be either a property-owning citizen or the lucky winner of an electoral lottery. The lottery's purpose is to add the winner's voice of "ordinary people" to the "expertise" of the wealthy. In practice, though, many of those who win such a lottery sell their voting tickets to vote-shapers, who use them as proxies for their own interests. What's surprising about the oligarchy is not its stranglehold on most real power, but rather, how often it does offer some concessions to the poor to avoid strikes or other disruptions around election time. It's a testament to the city's political classes that everyone does have some voice, no matter how weak—or, as others say, a testament to the people who stood up and demanded to be heard.

Militia Towers: Sticking up from the city like spikes, the 250-foot-tall militia towers contain the iron fist of the city-state's government; in a sense, they are vertical barracks. Most towers are linked by the seven skyrails to the Spike, the westernmost tower at Perdido Street Station and the militia headquarters. All towers have aerostats and dirigibles ready to deploy at a moment's notice to put down a rioting crowd or a strike the bosses can no longer tolerate.

For many years, the militia operated as a secret police force, ashamed to show their faces or mark themselves with badges and uniforms. Under Mayor Stem-Fulcher that policy ended, and the militia parade the streets openly now, intimidating those who might protest the city's increasing oppression. They serve as an army as well as secret police.

The towers in the city stand in ten locations throughout the city, including Flyside, Strack Island, Sheck, and Bonetown, and the central Spike at Perdido Street Station. Each is manned by at least 50 and up to 500 militia members, all equipped with studded leather armor, tower shields, clubs, and goggled helmets. The top of each tower is an observation platform where telescopes and optics are mounted to spy on the citizenry.

Troublemakers are brought to the Spike for judgment in secret courts by the faceless Magisters, judges who operate using false names. Sentencing is harsh and quick, and is usually followed by a whipping, fines, or transportation to the punishment factories for Remaking.

Parliament and Strack Island: Parliament is a dark edifice, a set of smoky black walls that jut from Strack Island like a shark's tooth or

Languages

Bas-Lag is a world of many languages. In New Crobuzon, the most common is Ragamoll, but the babble of dozens of others is common in certain districts and along the docks. The most widespread and interesting are listed below:

Base Kettai: The everyday language of Gnurr Kett. A simpler form of High Kettai.

Cymek Garuda, Shotek Garuda: Each desert has a dozen dialects of garuda speech, most of them related. The Cymek and Shotek languages are known in New Crobuzon, but only in the slums of Spatters where garuda roost.

Grindylow: No one knows whether the grindylow have a single language or many languages, but their speech is both arcane and powerful. Their magi seem able to use it to great effect. Some scholars speculate that their liquid language contains an especially harmonic or arcanophilic grammar, or that their phonemes are thaumaturgicly resonant.

High Kettai: A scholarly, elevated tongue used on Gnurr Kett for ritual and traditional occasions. The language is used only in its written form by the anophelii of the south, who use it to publish scholarly and intellectual work in Gnurr Kett.

High Khepri: This religious language of the khepri women is used in New Crobuzon, but is not the only khepri language to have come over from Bered Kai Nev.

Perrickish: The language of the Mandrake Islands.

Quiesy (Deadish): The language of High Cromlech, more often called Deadish, sounds nothing like most human tonuges. Most of its sounds are made in the back of the throat or are barked, as many of Quiesy speakers have little fine motor control over lips and tongues or have lost those parts entirely. Its silences are as important as some of its sounds, and there are modes of the language that are suitable for thanati nobles with mouths sewn shut, or with rotted voiceboxes. Some modes of the language are spoken with eyes and hands, rather than with the mouth.

Salt: The language of sailors on every ocean (and especially on the pirate city of Armada), Salt is a patois and polyglot mess that linguists have yet to untangle, made up of words taken from Ragamoll, Sunglari, and others, and evolving rapidly. It is rarely written down except in its Armadan incarnation.

Sunglari: The language of the island cactacae, used in Dreer Samher. A soft language with whistling elements, it carries well over winds and rain.

Fellid Vodyanoi, Lubbock Vodyanoi, Southern Vodyanoi: The vodyanoi speak different languages along different shores and watersheds. Most are related but borrow many words from the shores they touch.

a stingray's jag, some monstrous organic weapon rending the sky. The Parliament building at the confluence of the Canker and the Tar is actually a sprawling complex of government offices, laboratories, holding cells for high-level political prisoners, and archives of all city records. The living quarters of the Lord Mayor and his ministers are also here for times of unrest or civic disturbance.

The primary section of Parliament is the legislative building itself, home to the constant deliberations, bribery, and brinksmanship that make up New Crobuzoner political life. Numbers vary from session to session, as new rules of order are adopted by each Parliament to govern the size of the succeeding one, but generally between 300 and 500 members of Parliament work and live on Strack Island during the height of the sessions of Parliament.

The island is not open to the public. The submerged base of the Parliament's island is patrolled by vodyanoi militia. The skies above are watched by aerostats and well-trained garuda. The grounds themselves don't seem heavily armed, but are protected by well-placed sniper towers and a series of underground tunnels for moving troops quickly around the island out of sight.

Politics and Government

New Crobuzon has a mayor, who is responsible for everything that happens within the city proper, and a parliament, responsible for legislation and taxation.

The Mayor influences foreign and domestic policy through his control of the Militia, and he has the power of arrest, torture, and Remaking. To ensure the city prospers, he operates primarily through wheedling, deal-making, threatening to use the Militia, and enforcement of Parliament's edicts. He shares responsibility with Parliament for foreign policy, overseas trade, and conducting wars.

While Parliament is responsible for taxation and proposing legislation, it is primarily a check on mayoral power. In good times, the two operate in a sort of symbiotic harmony. In bad times, nothing is too outrageous: Fiscal threats, petty vengeances, blackmail, and outright Remakings are sometimes part of the political game in New Crobuzon.

Mayors and Party Politics

The mayor is effectively the head of state in New Crobuzon, although Parliament controls the purse strings and the home secretary controls much of the civil service. A cabinet of six to seventeen lords and ministers—appointed by the mayor—reports to him. Although the precise configuration varies, most cabinets include a Lord Privy Seal, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Minister of Justice (includes the junior minister for Remaking), Lord Captain of the Militia, Minister of State, and a Minister Without Portfolio. After the Iron Council period, the Urban Unity government is somewhat unusual and most political observers consider it something

Komagi
Khadoh
Cold Claw Sea
Yanni Seckilli Island
The Gengris
Cold Claw Sound
High Cromlech
Gibbing Water
Yoraketele
Suroch
Cold Claw Loch
Wormseye Scrub
New Crobuzon
Neovadan
Vadaunk
The Cacotopic Stain
The Rudewood
Cobsea
Myrshock
The Meagre Sea
Mandrake Islands
Perrick Nigh
Maru'ahm
Gálaggi Veldt
Shankell
Tesh
Cymek Desert
Fire Water Straits
N
W
E
S
Kohnid
Dreer Sanhher
Gnurr Kett
0
1000
miles

The Pirate Wars

Fought in two rounds between New Crobuzon and her maritime rivals, the first Pirate War began around 1100 and lumbered along for about four hundred years. It was fought among Jheshull, New Crobuzon, Gnurr Kett, Suroch, and many other island and maritime powers. Allegiances shifted all the time.

The Pirate Wars were also called the Slow Wars or the False Wars, as the fighting was desultory and trade and interaction continued between "enemies" at the same time. Its effects were more economic and industrial than military—although there were real military faceoffs—and New Crobuzon came out of it quite well. During the Battle of Torpid Coast in 1352 New Crobuzon beat Khadoh, a northern island. This boosted New Crobuzon's economy and made it the top dog during the Pirate Wars, ushering in the Full Years, which was a bit of a golden age for technology and economy that lasted a couple of centuries.

For the first four centuries, it wasn't a real war so much as an intense rivalry. When most people refer to the Pirate Wars, they mean the sudden flaring up of the war again round about 1510, when it turned into a real and bloody conflict. In 1545, New Crobuzon dropped the colourbomb, which was deemed to have ended the war, but in reality they'd won a year or so before that, when they dropped a torque bomb on Suroch. This created a small cacotopic stain, with all the chaos that entails. New Crobuzon has been the leading maritime power east of the Firewater Straits ever since.

of a "special period." What constitutes "normality" is now unclear.

Mayor Dagman Beyn: Elected more than two hundred years ago, Mayor Beyn served very briefly. He was the first mayor with access to the Weaver (see page 59)—both as a source of information and for the occasional assassination. Remembered also for his excellent collection of miniature orchids, it is believed he was killed during a conversation with the Weaver that went badly. The matter was hushed up and made a state secret.

Mayor Turgisadi: Mayor roughly 100 years after the Suroch Torque bombing, Turgisadi kept his grip on power after the Torque photographs were published through a series of street massacres he ordered to control the Sacramundi Riots of '89. He greatly expanded the size and power of the Militia afterward, and was elected to six consecutive terms.

Mayor Bentham Rudgutter: A member of the Fat Sun party, Mayor Rudgutter was extremely well-connected and able to slice the pie of taxes and kickbacks very finely. In addition, he was able to summon the Weaver and to lick the boots of the ambassador of the Czar of Hell, but Mayor Rudgutter was a political animal who lost some of his grip on power when an experiment using extraplanar drugs went seriously awry. He died in 1796 and was succeeded by Mayor Stem-Fulcher despite opposition from the Deputy Mayor, Montjohn Rescue.

Mayor Emily Stem-Fulcher: A pipe-smoker with a fine head of white hair, Mayor Stem-Fulcher had few good qualities but much political cunning. She was the home secretary for some years at the start of the expansion of New Crobuzon's naval power and leveraged that position into a run for mayor after Rudgutter's seat was left vacant. Once in power, she moved quickly and soon gained notoriety for ordering the Paradox Massacre, for her backroom deals with the New Quill Party, for pogroms against the xenian inhabitants of the city, and for Remaking many of her political opponents.

Partially in response to her harsh crackdown on civil liberties and her expansion of informers in all the major guilds and unions, Mayor Stem-Fulcher was shot dead in 1805. Among many of the upper classes, her greatest crime was not perpetrating the war against Tesh and the Witchocracy, but failing to generate a quick, easy victory. She was succeeded by Mayor Triesti, whose "special election" was confirmed by Parliament in special session due to the impossibility of holding a general election during the breakdown of civil order during the rule of the Collective.

Mayor Triesti: Mayor Triesti is the most dictatorial of the recent mayors of New Crobuzon, a fact that causes some unease even among the wealthy. He rose to prominence after sending a brief fluttering of leaflets demanding surrender from the rebels of the Collective, then crushing all opposition in the city. It is believed that thousands or even tens of thousands of victims of the massacre were cast into lime pits and mass graves, nameless but not forgotten.

Mayor Triesti's abrogation of "special executive powers" to expand internal controls and searches has led to a few run-ins with Parliament, but he has recently been elected to a second term. He is the leader of the Fat Sun party, but he talks constantly about his devotion to all parties and citizens in the Urban Unity government.

Parliament

Parliament is a body of some hundreds, and while the exact number varies depending on prevailing political winds and timing, 500 members of Parliament is a decent general estimate. The parliamentarians are some of the richest and most venial public servants in New Crobuzon, and consists entirely of propertied men and women, plus a few voydanoi and cactacae. The very few xenians who are elected are elevated by special mechanisms to ensure "reputable representation," although they could be elected simply on the usual system. Legend claims that the parliament was founded on Jabber's orders to rule after his disappearance. Parliament diligently looks after its own interests during each yearly session. The interests of the working man or woman of New Crobuzon are, for the most part, only interesting near election time.

The parliament is divided into at least a dozen main parties at any given time, although the ruling party is usually either the Fat Sun or (rarely) Finally We Can See. After the Iron Council returned to the city and the Commune was put down, new parties formed based on their view of the Tesh war, including the Victorians (hard-line hawks), the Concessionists, and the Suitors (pursuing peace at any cost). Since these factions cross over to some extent with traditional parties, some politicos have multiple loyalties. For example, a privileged party leader might be both a Victorian and a Fat Sunner. After the truce was signed, all of these parties lost a good deal of support and the traditional parties re-asserted themselves, although under new banners and spouting new slogans.

Diverse Tendency: A small party of xenians and a few humans, Diverse Tendency attempts to exploit legitimate xenian fears at the ballot box for its own ends (namely a share of the spoils of government). While it preaches tolerance, it does little to encourage it. The party sometimes holds the balance of power, but is too small to rule. Thoroughly corrupt, it is nonetheless popular in the xenian ghettoes. Xenian radicals view party members as sell-outs.

Fat Sun: The party of mercantile policy and monied interests, the thoroughly corrupt Fat Sun party reached its height during the government of Mayor Rudgutter. It has continued in one form or another since then and is always supremely well funded, slick, and predictable.

Finally We Can See: A corrupt, weaselly party best known for joining the governing coalition—regardless of the coalition's makeup. Finally We Can See traditionally makes liberal noises and claims to represent "the honest everyday citizen," but it has rarely been a majority party.

New Quill: A fascist party built on the remains of the Three Quills party, the New Quill appeals to the nativism and jingoist reaction against all xenians. Known for proposing pogroms to kill or exile the khepri, cactacae, vodyanoi, and all other non-humans from the city. Although not corrupt, the New Quill party is morally bankrupt.

From The Beacon:
Our Goals Are Met

Our recent victory over the barbarism that is Tesh has strengthened New Crobuzon's position in every way; progress and the New Crobuzon standard are on the march across land and sea. Tesh and its Witchocratic puppets dabble with the diabolical, sacrificing their own flesh and blood to invite otherworldly masters to visit their stinking cities and grant them favor, to prepare them against our inevitable and righteous rage. Their provocations with shunboats against our unarmed merchants will not go long unanswered.

Fearful and weak, the minions of Tesh dabbled with Torque and hellfire. Our soldiers withstood their corrupting blasts and forged victory from bitter struggle. Their own Torque experiments have left them sapped and teratogenically tainted, their lands and soil and blood impure. They have salted and abandoned their own lands to snatch the prize from our grasp, but even now our biothaumaturgists work to sift corruption from purity. In time, those lands and spoils will belong to the great people of New Crobuzon, earned by their toil and cleansed by our sciences.

Defeatists and Tesh sympathizers will claim that New Crobuzon must treat Tesh gingerly. In fact is it Tesh and the Witchocracy that threaten to strangle trade in the Firewater Straits with their tariffs and unlawful boardings and inspections. Our trade continues strong despite these provocations, and our cause will prevail.

From The Slogorne:
Ask a Veteran!

Why won't the Mayor and his toadies tell you what happened to Our Boys in Tesh? Why aren't they bragging about our victories over their soulcannons and efrit winds? Because we lost, and the "peace" with Tesh cost us plenty! Men gone, twisted, mutated. The new "Pride" taxes. We dropped toothbombs and colourbombs—everything but Jabber's Torque—and they didn't flinch. If Tesh is a tainted ruin, why don't any of our industrial magnates send their surveyors to inspect it?

Ask yourself: Where's the pride of the fleet, the Grand Justice? Where's Admiral Felton? Where's the welcoming parade for the stout men of the Overseas Militia? The *Beacon* won't tell you, and the magisters will remake you just for asking. If we won, why are we on our knees?

Want to know what really happened in the Tesh war? You don't have to believe your hard-working brothers at *The Slogorne*—ask a veteran today!

THE WORLD BEYOND

From Iron Bay just outside New Crobuzon to the Cold Claw Sea of the grindylow and beyond to the Firewater Straits controlled by the Witchocracy, it's a wide world.

Bered Kai Nev Continent

The khepri are apparently native to the eastern continent of Bered Kai Nev and fled because of the Ravening. All khepri on Rohagi are descended from this diaspora. It's unclear whether a khepri culture survives on

Bered Kai Nev, although most reports indicate that primitive khepri do sometimes appear on its shores.

The khepri first arrived in New Crobuzon about seven hundred years ago, not long after the Fervent Mantis arrived at the eastern continent of Bered Kai Nev, the khepri homeland. That homeland is now destroyed, as the terrible plague called the Ravening drove the khepri from Bered Kai Nev one hundred years ago—it's not clear whether the Fervent Mantis brought the disease with them, or were a response to its rise.

During the Ravening and the transoceanic migration, the khepri broodmothers of New Crobuzon deliberately forgot ten thousand years of khepri history—no one, not even the khepri themselves, is sure why. The refugees and survivors of the Tragic Crossing refuse to discuss it, although surely millions died in Bered Kai Nev during that time. This hole in their history is just one of the many griefs that have afflicted the khepri since they arrived in New Crobuzon.

The Rohagi Continent

New Crobuzon itself is on the northeast coast of the continent of Rohagi. The continent contains inner seas, mountains, and powerful rivers, making much of its terrain difficult or impassable, leading to New Crobuzon's development as a naval and mercantile economy.

The Cacotopic Stain

Warped by the vastly uncontrollable magic force called Torque, the Cacotopic Stain is one of several Cacotopoi. Living things can dip into the outskirts and survive, although this leads to bizarre and random magical effects (such as people turning into giant cytoplasms). The edges of the stain are frequented by inchmen (enormous insectoid centaurs) and other beasts, but the heart is just incomprehensible. The Cacotopic Stain opened about 550 years before the events in *Perdido Street Station*.

Cobsea

The medium-size city of Cobsea is one of New Crobuzon's important trading partners and was once part of the ill-fated railway venture meant to connect the two cities. The railway ran into difficulties of terrain, financing, and native opposition, and was never completed. Cobsea is run by a city council dominated by mercantile interests, but it lacks the heavy industry of New Crobuzon. The city government is notoriously unstable, with few governments lasting more than several months, and their regular collapse is accepted as the way of things in Cobsea.

The city's weavings and its wines are both prized, and business seems to get done without the help of either parliament or merchant subsidies.

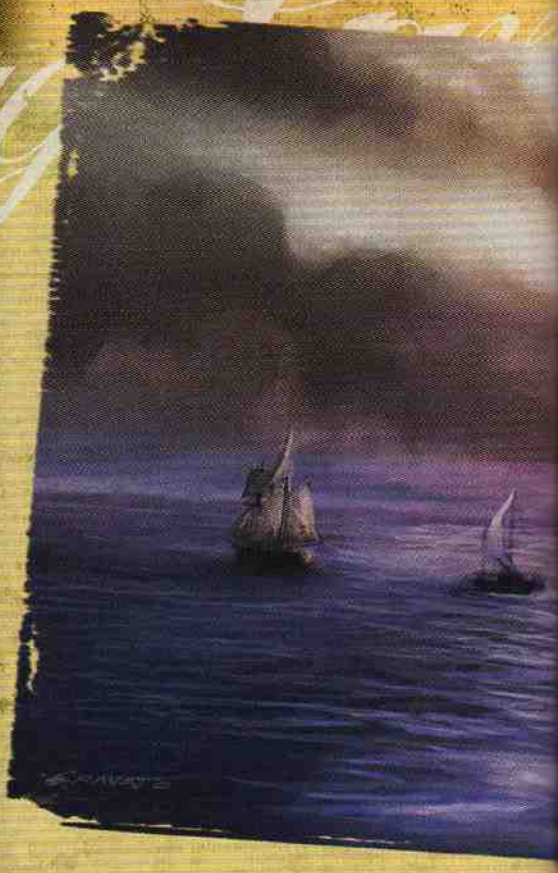
Dreer Samher

This small cactacae city lies on the very southern tip of the Cymek Desert, 2,000 miles from New Crobuzon, and it has given birth to a pragmatic sailing culture based on efficient cogs. Dreer Samher's economy is both mercantile and piratical, without too much division between the two. Its ships are crewed by trained chimpanzees, obeying whistled and shouted commands, because the cactacae sailors are too heavy to climb the rigging. The sheer power of a boarding party using rivebows and carrying enormous boarding axes able to sever a ship's mast makes them feared pirates; most merchants surrender without a fight once their ships are caught.

Dreer Samher's cactacae sailors are gifted storytellers and they deal with the anophelii regularly. They hire official privateers.

The Gengris

The homeland of the grindylow (see page 53) stretches across the bottom of the freshwater Cold Claw Sea, and exerts control over its southern reaches, up to the shores. It has no near neighbors, which is just as well, given the grindylows' paranoia and their horrible treatment of those who fall into their hands. Rumors tell of "limb-farms" and forced labor workshops where the grindylow grind up any creature unfortunate enough to cross their path.



Gengris religion is pretty opaque to outsiders—scholars believe they worship a variety of godlings and ancestor-spirits, with which their magi commune. They certainly build malachite chapels, forbidden to all outsiders, where dark rites are performed.

Their nearest neighbor is the island Yanni Seckilli to the northwest, but their real rivals are two vodyanoi-dominated nations of the Cold Claw Sea, Jangsach and Gharchetist. Jangsach is a decentralized country made up of fiefdoms, each ruled by a vodyanoi baron or chieftain. Gharcheltist is a somewhat more organized vodyanoi nation, united under a central administration.

High Cromlech

High Cromlech is a city-state of the undead more than 2,000 miles west of New Crobuzon in the Shatterjack Mountains, on the far side of the

Cold Claw Sea. In High Cromlech, the dead rule as necropolitans or sentient zombies. The dead are the wealthier, important inhabitants; the living—called the quick—are lesser citizens. Some are slum-dwelling underclass, others are respectable working class and small businesspeople. Not all quick are oppressed, but they are less socially powerful than the dead.

The social ladder in High Cromlech leads through the grave. Social climbers progress from a "liveman" or "livewife" to a "deadman" or "deadwife," if they can buy their way into the upper echelons and afford the specific treatments necessary to rise as an abdead (the New Crobuzon term for the undead).

Vampirs are allowed to live in High Cromlech because they are abdead but are not rulers. Quite the reverse, vampirs are considered rather pathetic junkies who are kept alive on the whim and sufferance of the High Cromlech living.

Little other information is available to most scholars, although it is known that the undead gentry of Armada emigrated from High Cromlech.

Myrshock

Myrshock is a small, ugly town a bit more than 600 miles south of New Crobuzon. In many ways it is New Crobuzon in miniature: racially mixed with a lot of vodyanoi who live in a canal ghetto, a few freebooting garuda from the Cymek, and a handful of cactacae.

Myrshock has an industrial, port-based economy, but it is built around a saltwater harbor rather than an estuarine one. This has advantages and drawbacks. While the vodyanoi cannot serve as stevedores there, ships pulled by bridled seawyrms can enter directly into the harbor rather than being loaded offshore. Its temples feature somewhat elegant minarets, but these are obscured by the city's many dirigible mooring posts.

Myrshock's population is at most 55,000, although it conducts no census. Myrshock was to be one anchor point of the Myrshock-Cobsea railway, but its construction failed and the company went bankrupt.

Shankell

Shankell is a big cactacae-run trade town on the north shore of the Cymek desert and is the home of the worship of Sanshad. The city is also known as Borridor, the Salt-Hole, the Corskcrew Citadel, and other names, and has minority populations of humans and other races. Shankell merchants run ferries and supplies across the Meagre Sea to Myrshock, and ultimately to New Crobuzon. It is celebrated for its thriving gladiatorial scene, with fights in hook-wire cages and fleshpits, where large amounts of money changes hands.

The worship of Sanshad, a manifestation of the Sun, is the official religion of the city, which is run by a committee of cactacae, but the place is fairly relaxed about other religions. The cult of Sanshad is also established in the Glasshouse in New Crobuzon; it's unclear whether all cactacae revere him, or whether

it is simply a matter of familiarity and related groups of cactacae. Certainly the god is not widely revered in Dreer Samher.

Suroch

The city of Suroch lies in ruins after the Pirate Wars (see sidebar). It was hit by a Torque bomb in 1545, when the war was largely over. The last somewhat official expedition to the ruins of Suroch was made in 1688, during which the effects of the bomb (even after a century) still affected, mutated, and killed several of the crew. The photographs of that expedition taken by the heliotypist Sacramundi and printed at his own expense almost toppled the government in New Grobuzon. The images are hard to forget: cockroach trees, fifty-horned carapace-covered goats, living gear machines descended from train engines, herds of things that might once have been human but have clearly devolved to apelike bestiality.

Most people steer well clear of Suroch these days, as the photos show just a few of the completely Torque-twisted entities. Any visitors exposed to the torque there risk psychic assault, magical mutation, cancer, and madness. Some members of the Sacremundi expedition grew tentacles; others chose suicide after holes began appearing at random in their bodies. No blood, no pain, just holes.

Suroch is now a name used to frighten children and warn of the dangers of meddling with Torque. The threat of Torque was believed to have led to the recent truce with Tesh.

Yoraketche

Yoraketche is a weak, warlike country northwest of New Crobuzon. It is home to a race of brave but rather stupid warrior-riders, skilled in the bow and in raiding for slaves and livestock, but it has few other points to recommend it. It very loosely controls a large region of grassland steppes, and is mostly concerned with continuing ancient tribal feuds. It has little political power but produces mercenaries who are frequently hired thousands of miles away for their fierceness, competence, and ignorance.

The Islands

The oceans and islands are a major portion of Bas-Lag. Only a few of the ports of call are covered here.

Armada

The wildest pirate city known is a constellation of ships, rafts, barges, and hulks that serves as a floating base for a powerful pirate fleet led by the Lovers—two scarred figures. It is believed that Armada has been destroyed at least twice (once during the Pirate Wars, a second time on a long voyage), but some claim it survived. Its core is a set of ships (such as the *Grand Easterly*) built and outfitted for war by New Crobuzon and other combatants of the wars.

Armada is tolerant of the Remade, and it is home to large colonies of scabmettlers and High Cromlech vampirs. The floating city itself is divided into semi-feudal ridings such as Dry Water and Garwater, each centered on a major hull or vessel, and each with its own form of government, ranging from semi-feudal to democratic to naïve laissez-faire experiments. At its heart, it is a deadly place, and power does come from violence. Among the most deadly citizens is Uther Doul, who wields the *Possible Sword* (see sidebar).

Armada's citizens speak Salt.

Basilisk Channel

The Basilisk Channel lies to the east of New Crobuzon, south of Jheshull. Its independent islands rely heavily on New Crobuzon as their major trading partner, especially those closer to the coast.

Gnurr Kett

Gnurr Kett is an island nearly 2,000 miles south of New Crobuzon, 500 miles east of the Cymek desert. Its inhabitants don't trade much with New Crobuzon, mostly dealing with the cactacae of Dreer Samher. Gnurr Kett and Dreer Samher are independent but have a close working and trading relationship.

Gnurr Kett possesses a mercantile culture with a mostly peaceful tradition of quiet scholarship and competence. Its economy includes indigenous farming, fishing, sea-trade, and an important stratum of intellectuals and a cadre of cantors—a kind of singing scholar. The island is also home to an important publishing industry of theoretical tracts.

Its capitol is Kohnid, a small but important center of scholarship. For a few scholars, Kohnid is an intellectual paradise, as High Kettai theory is important and relatively rare. Gnurr Kett keeps a colony of anophelii as sort of pet scholars, using the (safely bloodless) cactacae of Dreer Samher as their wardens, through a three-way trading loop. Their knowledge finds its way to Kohnid, but many crucial primary works published there never leave the islands.

The Jheshull Islands

The Jheshull Islands are a loose group of three islands a few hundred miles from the coast north of New Crobuzon. They're piratical and fought New Crobuzon during the Pirate Wars (about 1500), after which they lost a great deal of power.

Nova Esperium

New Crozubon's penal colony is failing due to its small population, disease, monsters, and natives. Anyone exiled to it almost never returns to New Crobuzon, and transport to Nova Esperium is considered a death sentence by most citizens of the city.

Salkrikrator, City of the Cray

The great aquatic metropolis of the cray is the leading city and capitol of the Salkrikaltor Cray Commonwealth, a set of almost twenty cray cities. The Salkrikrator commonwealth is an entire undersea country in the Swollen Ocean between Bartoll and the Gnomon Tor islands, and the city itself has a population of roughly

The Possible Sword

The *possible sword* is an incredibly powerful artifact allowing its wielder to make every possible strike.

Lore: Dating from the days of the Ghosthead Empire, this 3,000-year-old sword has faded in and out of legend. Most famously wielded by Uther Doul, a renowned pirate from the city of Armada, the sword is an artifact from a time when anything was possible. The sword reflects this mysterious power.

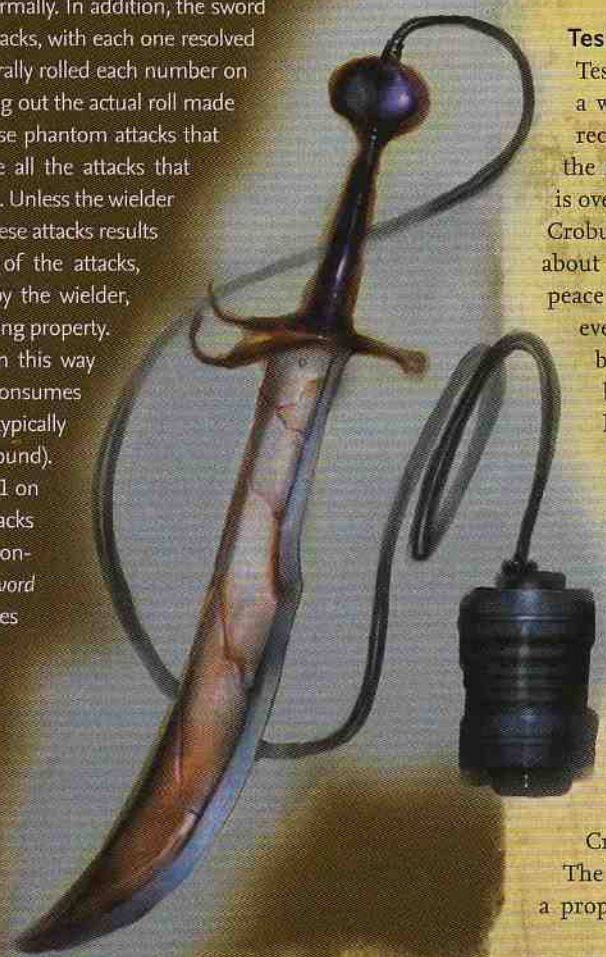
Description: The *possible sword* is a very sharp ceramic longsword of ancient make. Attached to the pommel of the sword are a series of wires that attach to a special battery, typically worn at the waist.

Activation: While anyone can wield the *possible sword* and gain its basic bonuses, its true powers are much more difficult to activate. The sword requires possibility energy to work, and the bearer must be physically altered by expert biothaumaturgical surgery to use the weapon at its full potential (this surgery requires a DC 23 Profession [biothaumaturgy] check and a DC 20 Heal check). In addition, due to the imprecise nature of the weapon, only those who are not proficient in its use can unlock its power. Characters who are proficient in longsword must take Exotic Weapon Proficiency (possible sword) to learn how to improperly wield the sword (the wielder must take the –4 nonproficient penalty). A wielder who meets these prerequisites must turn on the sword, a free action, to gain its benefits.

Effects: The *possible sword* is a *+2 sword of wounding* in the hands of most wielders. When the sword is powered on (and used by a wielder who meets all the prerequisites) the sword's true potential becomes apparent. For each attack made, the wielder makes a single attack roll and resolves it normally. In addition, the sword also makes 19 additional attacks, with each one resolved as if the die rolled had naturally rolled each number on the die (1 through 20, leaving out the actual roll made by the wielder). Each of these phantom attacks that hit deal half damage, while all the attacks that miss deal 1 point of damage. Unless the wielder rolls a natural 20, none of these attacks results in a critical hit and none of the attacks, except for the one made by the wielder, activates the sword's wounding property. Attacking with the sword in this way is a full-round action and consumes one battery charge (which typically has 20–120 charges when found). If the wielder rolls a natural 1 on his attack roll, all of the attacks miss and one charge is consumed. When the *possible sword* is turned off, the wielder takes 1d4 points of Constitution damage and is fatigued for 1d4 hours +1 hour per round used.

Aura/Caster Level: Overwhelming transmutation; CL 30th.

Weight: 6 lb.



200,000 (without a census, the figure is necessarily vague).

The city itself is the largest of the cray cities, with docks at sea level and buildings below. These buildings are complete with airlocks, pumping stations, air-breather's buildings and aquatic buildings. The cray are half-human and half giant lobster, a civilized species whose main interests are control of schools of fish, beds of kelp, and other oceanic treasures.

Salkrikrator is a valued trading partner for New Crobuzon. All other cray settlements trade underwater-produced luxuries, foods, and a few bits of arcane technology. Salkrikrator also trades with other underwater polities, a process of which New Crobuzon knows next to nothing. Connections to the grindylow are suspected but cannot be proven. If they exist, they must pass through subterranean channels and a halocline to the Cold Claw Sea.

Tesh and the Witchocracy

Tesh and the Witchocracy fought a war against New Crobuzon in recent years, but it's unclear what the result was. Certainly, the war is over, but the government in New Crobuzon is not really saying much about what happened, or how the peace accord was reached. Whatever the result, the shipyards are busily rebuilding the New Crobuzon fleet. Many ruined or limbless soldiers and sailors live on the streets, an entire generation scarred by the fighting. Explorers going to Tesh don't return, while spies and merchants alike are turned back at the border. The Witchocracy was hardly affected by the war (or at least, it still controls the Firewater Straits), but its ships no longer call at New Crobuzon's ports.

The lack of information has led to a propaganda struggle between the

mayor and the militia on one side, and small, independent presses on the other, churning out broadsides and tracts questioning the Parliament line. Every bit of news is filtered through two totally different lenses, and citizens of the city are confused and alarmed by the collapsing of currencies, trading houses, and industries dependent on trade through the Firewater Straits.

LOST EMPIRES

The world of Bas-Lag has seen at least two great empires, one mythic and extraplanar, one bloody and brief. Both are described here because their artifacts and rulers might create great adventures on Rohagi and beyond.

Anophelii Empire

Also sometimes known as the Malarial Queendom, the Anophelii Empire was a brutal feudal monarchy ruled by bloodthirsty anophelii females who needed warm avian or mammalian blood to feed their incredible intelligence, speed, and thaumaturgical insight. It expanded rapidly to feed their hunger, and all its subject races worked and bled until they died.

The Queendom existed around 750 BNC, more than 2,500 years before the present day. It was short-lived, lasting not much more than 50 years, and its heart was in Shoteka, the continent to the south of Rohagi. However, the anophelii queens had outposts in southern Rohagi, and also in the Shards, a huge archipelago a long way east, and in some islands in between—any place with a warm climate and fresh water. The whole thing collapsed when there were no more easy conquests, the blood sacrifices ran out, and the female anophelii turned from smart, powerful killers to mindless, powerful killers.

Their lost treasures include powerful tomes of summonings and conjurations, technomagical fusions and geared engines for harnessing elementals. Any explorer fool enough to risk unleashing the anophelii females on the world again might find the cash quite lucrative. The cactacae claim to have plundered all the hoards of the Queendom except one, which they call the "Machinery Beach." Located on an island of the anophelli in the southern seas, it holds thousands of half-forgotten machines, their gears slowly rusting in the salt air.

The Ghosthead Empire

This long-vanished empire is a great source for ancient instruments of power, obscure lore, and possibility magic—but it is also very poorly understood and remembered. Its rulers arrived from beyond the bounds of Bas-Lag around 2000 BNC and established a surreal, violent, impossibly strange empire. The Ghosthead themselves were clearly extraplanar, and few records of the time seem able to describe them or their technologies; Bas-Lag was far too primitive to understand what the Ghosthead brought, and the Ghosthead were in no mood to explain. Instead, they conquered all of Rohagi and most of Shoteka. Stories about the Ghosthead don't make much sense, as they seem to have existed along dimensional axes that human and xenians alike don't comprehend. The two most reliable accounts claim they were "human, with ghostlike heads, occasionally tentacular" and "invisible but clearly cephalopodish, with insectile heads and mechanical ovipositors." Neither description seems helpful to current scholars. Neither description seems entirely sane, either, but this seems a recurrent problem with the Ghosthead.

In any case, the Ghosthead fought with the khepri insect empires of Bered Kai Nev, the huge eastern continent. That fight seems to have been a draw, largely based on the khepri ability to throw vast numbers at the problem, but records are very sparse. These days, the empire is considered half-mythic. Bizarre histories claim that the Ghosthead empire reached the moon, built metal fish to swim to the stars, and practiced the lost art of possibility mining along the Scar, a rift in the fabric of the world. Artifacts from this time are uncovered every decade or so (often in new shapes, see the *Possible Sword* sidebar).

The Ghosthead's rulers and their precise form of government are hard to establish because of the weird mix of secrets, myths, and archaeology surrounding them. They ruled firmly for about 600 years or so, then a slow-building rebellion grew among the Rohagi subject races. At this first stage, this revolt was called the Contumancy and seems to have been largely a matter of attacking Ghosthead institutions, representatives, and devices. The surviving records speak of "possibility fraud" and "demonstration devices" and other strange (or at least untranslatable) forms of rebellion—it may be that not all of it was violent.

Later, around about 1350 BNC, it exploded into outright rebellion, known as the Sloughing Off, a century-long process of revolt. Attacks and reprisals were fierce; many cities and towns simply vanished in "thought cleansing" operations, while other cities seem to have learned how to kill or drive away Ghosthead occupiers without ever raising armies.

At some point during the Sloughing Off, the cactacae race first appeared. Whether they were born naturally or created is debated. The records describe a Ghosthead retreat during this period but no one knows how to contact their distant plane or guard against their return. After the Sloughing Off, the Ghosthead disappeared as mysteriously as they came, and the allegiances between groups, tribes, and races that helped the rebellion succeed collapsed. The Rohagi polities splintered into infighting and cultural degeneration, and began the First Umbric Age.

People of BAS-LAG

by Wolfgang Baur • illustrated by Andrew Hou

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The lands surrounding New Crobuzon are not just human lands: they are also home to cactus folk, the amphibious vodyanoi, the scarab-headed khepri, and the Remade, members of the other races who have been reshaped in the New Crobuzon punishment factories. All these are playable races for those who would adventure across Bas-Lag.

CACTACAE

These powerful fighters are a race of cactus folk with wide-ranging homelands including both the veldts and northern grasslands as well as the deep deserts of Cymek, Dreer Samher, and the South. They typically stand 7 to 8 feet tall, with powerful vegetable muscles and thick fibrous skin in varying shades of green studded with spines extending from tiny to finger-long. Some specimens of gray, yellow, and brown are less common, and these varying skin colors might also indicate age or illness. In springtime, many cactacae sprout small red or yellow flowers along the ridges of their dark green skin.

Cactacae heads sit flat on their shoulders, without necks. Their fingers are thick and fairly clumsy, although their grip is powerful enough to crush bones. An oily sap flows through their veins rather than blood, and their bones are strangely shaped, unlike any vertebrate's skeleton. A full-grown cactacae is not just tall but also massive, weighing as much as 500 to 700 pounds.

Cactacae prefer climates of heat and light, but they can be active day or night and can survive cold temperatures with proper equipment. Their preferred garments tend toward colored sashes, loincloths, and rich jewelry.

Cactacae can sleep standing up with their legs locked. They speak Sunglari in the south around Dreer Samher, and Ragamoll in the north near New Crobuzon.

CACTACAE WEAPONS

The cactacae race uses many exotic weapons of its own design, too large and powerful to be used by many others. The best-known are the rivebow, the chakri, and the greatcleaver.

The rivebow is the best-known of the cactacae weapons. It is an enormous crossbow that fires large spinning buzz blades. Because the cactacae lavish such attention and resources on this weapon, masterwork rivebows are actually relatively easy to find.

The chakri are disc-bladed throwing weapons that can also serve as ammunition for a rivebow.

The greatcleaver is a slashing, two-handed melee weapon with 10-foot reach.

CACTACAE WEAPONS

Exotic Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Two-Handed Melee Weapon							
Greatcleaver	40 gp	2d6	2d8	×3	—	15 lb.	Slashing
Ranged Weapons							
Chakri	10 gp	1d4	1d6	×2	20 ft.	1 lb.	Slashing
Rivebow	200 gp	1d10	2d6	19–20/×3	40 ft.	14 lb.	Slashing

Cactacae Racial Traits

- +4 Strength, +2 Constitution, –4 Dexterity
- Medium: As Medium creatures, cactacae have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Cactacae base land speed is 30 feet. Cactacae can move at this speed even when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load (unlike other creatures, whose speed is reduced in such situations).
- Natural armor: Cactacae gain a +1 natural armor bonus to their Armor Class. This protection combines with Dexterity, magical bonuses, and worn armor.
- Plant Type: Cactacae are members of the Plant type and gain all of the abilities and vulnerabilities of that type, including immunity to poison, sleep effects, polymorph, paralysis, and stunning. They have low-light vision and are not subject to critical hits. Unlike other members of their type, they require sleep and are not immune to mind-affecting effects.
- Powerful Build: The physical stature of a cactacae lets them function in many ways as if they were one size category larger. Whenever a cactacae is subject to a size modifier or special size modifier for an opposed check (such as during grapple checks, bull rush attempts, and trip attempts), the cactacae is treated as one size larger if doing so is advantageous. A cactacae can use weapons designed for a creature one size larger without penalty. However, their space and reach remain those of a creature of their actual size. The benefits of this racial trait stack with the effects of powers, abilities, and spells that change the subject's size category.
- Spines: Thousands of tough spines cover the cactacae body. These protrusions allow them to deal 1d6 points of lethal damage (instead of 1d4 nonlethal) when they choose to deal damage as part of a successful grapple.
- Weapon Familiarity: Cactacae may treat rivebows, chakri, and

THE TARDY

Using magic, the northern veldt-cactacae keep some of their bulbs in a coma for months after the others have long since crawled up from the soil. These late bloomers are the ge-ain, literally "the tardy." When they do grow to wakefulness, these cactacae are warped by the magic that retarded their birth. They are enormous, with bending wooden bones, fused fingers, and encrusted, thickened skin. Their misshapen tongues and lips make them slur and mangle their speech.

The average Tardy's senses are sharp, but they live in constant pain from their deformities. The cactacae never give the Tardy names, but they both fear and worship these twisted forms of their own kind. Tardy often serve as scouts and lookouts for cactacae tribes or societies at war.

The Tardy are size Large and have a +5 natural armor rather than +1. Their folded, thick skin and vegetal circulatory system provides damage reduction of 10/bludgeoning or slashing. Piercing weapons have little effect on a Tardy: they don't bleed as humans do, but rather exude watery sap that seals punctures quickly. The Tardy ability score modifiers are Strength +8, Constitution +6, Wisdom –2, Dexterity –6. The Tardy gain a +3 racial bonus on Spot and Listen checks.

The Tardy have a +4 level adjustment.

greatcleavers as martial weapons, rather than exotic weapons.
- +2 racial bonus on Craft checks that are related to wood.
- Automatic Language: Common and Sunglari. Bonus Languages: Any (other than secret languages, such as Druidic).
- Favored Class: Fighter.
- Level Adjustment: +2.

KHEPRI

The khepri are a race of women with 2-foot-long headscarabs that resemble enormous beetles, complete with tiny mandibles, antennae, vestigial wings beneath powerful casings, and compound eyes. Khepri males are small insectile animals, essentially mindless 2-foot-long scuttling things unable to do more than feed and reproduce.

Female khepri brush their antennae in greeting to one another, much as humans shake hands. Khepri mouthparts cannot communicate in Common or any other tongue, although they communicate among themselves by scent and chemical gusts that form a powerful silent language that other races can smell and taste but cannot understand. Khepri speak to other races using sign language or written notes.

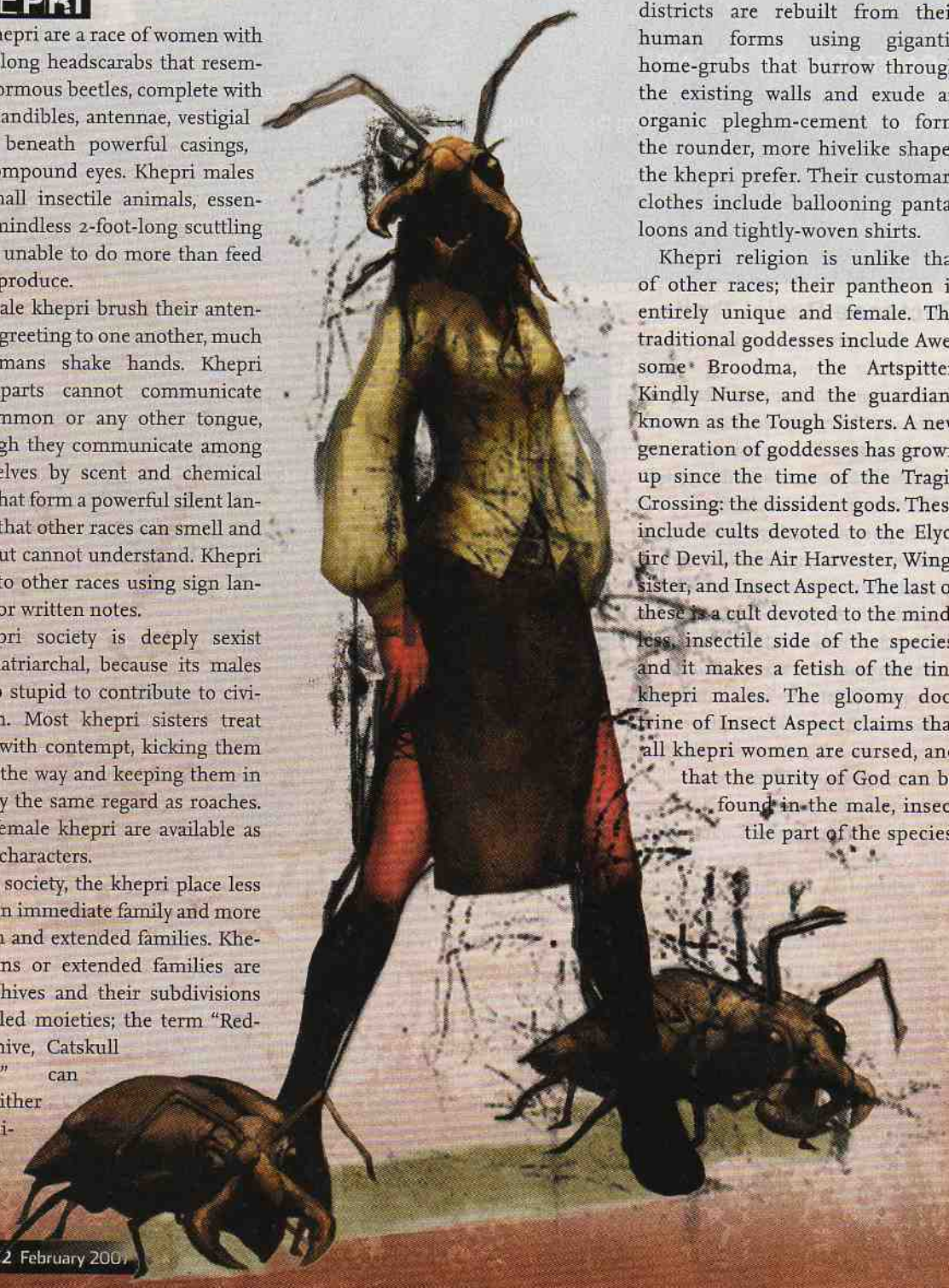
Khepri society is deeply sexist and matriarchal, because its males are too stupid to contribute to civilization. Most khepri sisters treat males with contempt, kicking them out of the way and keeping them in roughly the same regard as roaches. Only female khepri are available as player characters.

As a society, the khepri place less value on immediate family and more on clan and extended families. Khepri clans or extended families are called hives and their subdivisions are called moieties; the term "Redwing hive, Catskull moiety" can mean either an individual khepri or a particular place in New Crobuzon's Kinken ghetto.

Khepri guards and fighters are prized for their silence and their skill, but many khepri turn to crime as well. The khepri crime-queens of New Crobuzon are well organized and very difficult to infiltrate. While the crime-queens are as unsentimental and greedy as any other gangsters, their followers' loyalties are not just about money: they are also partly based on hive and moiety. Their preferred weapons include spears, longspears, flintlocks, crossbows, and hooked nets.

The khepri are recent arrivals in New Crobuzon. They keep to themselves in ghettos of their own kind, forming an underclass of immigrants in districts such as Kinken, Creekside, and Spit Hearth. These districts are rebuilt from their human forms using gigantic home-grubs that burrow through the existing walls and exude an organic pleghm-cement to form the rounder, more hivelike shapes the khepri prefer. Their customary clothes include ballooning pantaloons and tightly-woven shirts.

Khepri religion is unlike that of other races; their pantheon is entirely unique and female. The traditional goddesses include Awesome Broodma, the Artspitter, Kindly Nurse, and the guardians known as the Tough Sisters. A new generation of goddesses has grown up since the time of the Tragic Crossing: the dissident gods. These include cults devoted to the Elyctire Devil, the Air Harvester, Wingsister, and Insect Aspect. The last of these is a cult devoted to the mindless, insectile side of the species, and it makes a fetish of the tiny khepri males. The gloomy doctrine of Insect Aspect claims that all khepri women are cursed, and that the purity of God can be found in the male, insectile part of the species.



STINGBOX

This metaclockwork device is only found among the khepri, who use it to electrocute or stun their targets.

The stingbox resembles a squared-off box with a handle at one end and two whiplike flails at the other; the flails have a reach of 20 feet. These ends are extendable and are whipped out to catch the enemy, and then a powerful electrical charge is sent through the line. While the base damage it deals is minimal (1 or 1d3 points of damage), each strike also deals 1d8 points of electrical damage. Creatures struck by a stingbox must make an immediate DC 13 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d3 rounds.

Using a stingbox without penalty requires an Exotic Weapon Proficiency; in addition to the usual non-proficiency penalty, any untrained user of a stingbox who rolls a 1 on an attack roll shocks himself for normal damage and must save or be stunned.

Stingboxes are charged items and must be recharged after twelve successful attacks. Stingbox charges are sold only by khepri merchants to those they trust, and cost 10 gp per box charge.

Exotic Weapons	Cost	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Two-Handed Melee Weapon						
Stingbox	Variable	1d3+1d8 electrical	×2	—	4 lb.	Slashing

Some Insect Aspect worshipers take no names for themselves (names are decadent), instead concentrating on food, sex, and survival without motive or thought.

The khepri first arrived in New Crobuzon about seven hundred years ago, not long after the Fervent Mantis arrived at the eastern continent of Bered Kai Nev, the khepri homeland. That homeland is now destroyed, as the terrible plague called the Ravening drove the khepri from Bered Kai Nev one hundred years ago. During that time, the khepri broodmothers of New Crobuzon deliberately forgot ten thousand years of khepri history—no one, not even the khepri themselves, is sure why. The refugees and survivors of the Tragic Crossing refuse to discuss it, although surely millions died in Bered Kai Nev during that time. This hole in their history is just one of the many griefs that have afflicted the khepri diaspora since it arrived in New Crobuzon.

Khepri Racial Traits

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Wisdom, –2 Constitution, –2 Charisma
- Medium: As Medium creatures, khepri have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Khepri base land speed is 30 feet.
- Darkvision: Khepri can see in the dark up to 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise like normal sight, and khepri can function just fine with no light at all.
- +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment (mind affecting) spells: Khepri minds are different enough from most creatures' minds that their thoughts are difficult to control.
- +4 racial bonus on saving throws to resist gaze attacks: The insectoid eyes of the khepri headscarab filter many harmful sight-based effects.
- +2 racial bonus on Intimidate and Spot checks.
- Automatic Language: Khepri. Bonus Languages: Common.
- Favored Class: Cleric.

REMADE

The Remade are not a true race, but rather a creation of the punishment factories of New Crobuzon. The flesh of criminals and political offenders is reshaped to suit the purposes of the city rulers; their limbs might be reshaped as a commentary on their crimes, or they might be rebuilt to serve in the colony of Nova Esperium, half the world away from the mother city.

Although their melding of flesh and machine makes the Remade resemble constructs, the race gains no construct immunities or innate advantages; the victims of the process must relearn walking, speaking, and other simple physical acts in their new bodies. Over time, they master the power their bodies give them.

Remade are almost always human, although some xenian Remade are known to exist. These are rare and attract a certain amount of curiosity just by their appearance; some of these xenian Remade support themselves by staging carnival sideshows and exhibition fights. Other Remade might come not from the punishment factories but from independent chirugeons who cater to gladiators, pit-fighters, bodyguards and others who seek to enhance their natural gifts.

Creating a Remade

"Remade" is an inherited template that can be added to any living, corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

THE REMADE AND FREEMADE TABOO

Any Remade character in New Crobuzon is at the bottom of the social order, a pariah who is both legally and politically oppressed. No upright citizen of the middle class loves a criminal, and the default assumption of most New Crobuzoners is that a Remade is a political dissident, a violent criminal, and possibly a traitor to the city. Among the city's less fortunate, the Remade are viewed with suspicion.

Outside the city, small bands of fReemade have escaped from captivity and servitude in New Crobuzon and live as bandits, free from this stigma. Even there, the taboo against the Remade means that few of the fReemade add to their Remakings: the fReemade are renegades from a punishment and body modifications they did not choose.

Adding to one's Remaking requires the help of dissident fReemade or biothaumaturges, so adding to one's Remakings is very difficult and rare (and requires time spent on Knowledge [local] and Gather Information checks just to make the right connections).

If your campaign is set in Bas-Lag, a player character is likely either a Remade escapee or one of the rare fReemade who has chosen a form for himself for practical or political reasons. In either case, it's not an easy life.

A Remade uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Special Qualities: Becoming a Remade requires the base creature to undergo a regimen of tortures, surgeries, and biothaumaturgical procedures. After enduring this process, the character gains 1d3 enhancements and the same number of defects, either specifically chosen by the DM or randomly rolled on the following charts.

Rather than determining exactly what a Remade looks like, these enhancements and defects assume that functionality is the important element. The consummate eyes enhancement could come from a set of gigantic compound eyes, from finely-ground crystal lenses and telescopes, or from a hawk's head fashioned into a sort of hat permanently attached to the PC. The appearance should be up to the player; the mechanics are defined here.

Remade Enhancements

d10 roll	Enhancement
1	Aquatic Prosthesis
2	Armored Integument
3	Consummate Eyes
4	Metaclockwork
5	Night Vision
6	Olfactory Enhancers
7	Supernumerary Arms
8	Supernumerary Legs
9	Unnatural Weapon
10	Wakeful Engine

Aquatic Prosthesis: The Remade gains primitive gills or an equivalent breathing apparatus. The gills are not especially effective, but grant a +4 bonus on checks or saving throws made to resist all drowning or poison gas checks. In addition, the character gains a swim speed of 10 feet or, if he already has a swim speed, a 10-foot increase to his base swim speed.

Armored Integument: The character gains +1 natural armor.

Consummate Eyes: This Remade has extra eyes, granting him a +4 racial bonus on Search and Spot checks.

Metaclockwork: The Remade has a specialized metaclockwork component that performs a single thaumaturgical function 3 times per day. At the time of Remaking, the DM chooses three 0-level cleric or wizard spells the enhancement can replicate. Each function can be used multiple times per day, but every use counts toward the Remade's daily limit.

Night Vision: The character gains an additional 60 feet of darkvision, to a maximum of 240 feet.

Olfactory Enhancers: The character gains the benefits of the scent

special ability (see page 314 of the *Monster Manual*).

Spring-loaded Jumper: The Remade is a powerful leaper and gains +4 bonus on all Balance and Jump checks.

Supernumerary Arms: The Remade is multi-limbed. This new limb is somehow awkward or weak but aids in a number of mundane tasks. The character gains a +2 bonus on Climb checks and can hold an item weighing less than 5 pounds in it. The hand does not have the articulation to wield a weapon or throw items. It also does not provide extra slots for magic items.

Supernumerary Legs: The Remade possess an additional leg, wheels, or powerful tentacles. This grants him a 5-foot increase in base speed and a +4 bonus on ability checks made to resist being bull rushed or tripped.

Unnatural Weapon: Some dangerous tool, makeshift claw, or wicked appendage has been permanently affixed to the Remade. This attachment can be used as a natural weapon and deals damage depending on the Remade's size.

Remade's Size	Weapon Damage
Fine	—
Diminutive	1
Tiny	1d2
Small	1d3
Medium	1d4
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8
Gargantuan	2d6
Colossal	2d8

Wakeful Engine: Remade with the wakeful engine must take the boiler defect. Characters with this enhancement require no rest periods to avoid fatigue or exhaustion (although they still require periods of quiet contemplation to regain spells).

This modification is often made to horses, oxen, and other beasts of burden.

Remade Defects

d10 roll	Defect
1	Boiler
2	Clumsy
3	Crippled Limb
4	Dulled Faculties
5	Hideous Deformity
6	Malfunctioning Memories
7	Poor Healing
8	Slow
9	Stiff Jointed
10	Wheels

Boiler: The character has a steam boiler that constantly requires fuel, and costs 2 gp per day to feed. If fuel runs out, the character is immediately fatigued. For every day the boiler remains out, the character must make a Fortitude save (DC 14 + 1/day out) or be exhausted. Completely submerging in water or other liquids extinguishes the boiler. Characters with boilers weigh 40 pounds more than characters without.

Clumsy: Many Remade are of shoddy construction, and Remade are notoriously unable to control their bodies. Their attachments often fumble or fail at motor coordination. This Remade's Dexterity score drops by –2.

Crippled Limb: One of the character's hands or whole arms has been amputated, weakened, or warped to the point of near uselessness. The Remade cannot wield weapons with the afflicted limb or make use of weapons that require two hands. The limb lacks the ability to grip and cannot hold items, although, depending on the details of the defect, the Remade might still retain his finger and arm or wrist magic item slots.

Dulled Faculties: The Remade's normal senses are somehow compromised by his augmentations. Choose two of the following penalties: –4 on Listen checks, –4 on Search checks, or –4 on Spot checks.

Hideous Deformity: The Remade has been fashioned with oozing sores, sealed mouth, exposed muscle or bone, or similar visual flaws. The character takes a –4 penalty on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks.

Malfunctioning Memories: The character's brain has somehow been tampered with, affecting his memory and skills. There is a 25% chance that whenever the Remade makes a skill check he only counts half of his ranks to determine his skill modifier. This defect has no effect on skill checks in which the character has no ranks.

Poor Healing: The Remade does not recover from injuries well. The character regains only a quarter as many hit points from natural healing as he normally would (minimum 1 hp per day).

Slow: Because of their complex skeletal structures, metal parts, and general bolted-together natures, some Remade are simply not that fast. These characters' base movement is reduced by –10 feet.

Stiff Jointed: The character is bound by rusty metal joints, awkward bony outcroppings, poorly healed wounds, or a variety of other maladies that hinder his movement. He takes a –4 penalty on Balance, Jump, and Tumble checks.

Wheels: Remade without legs and feet must make DC 14 Strength checks to move over any space of rough terrain. (This DC might be higher in certain situations, as determined by the DM.) Failure means that the character has wasted 5 feet of movement and must either choose another path or try again (if he has any movement remaining). He cannot charge or run over even mildly uneven ground. These Remade cannot climb stairs or ladders without a Strength check for each 10 feet of length (DC 15 for stairs, DC 20 for ladders). All Swim and Ride checks take a –4 penalty.

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature +1.

VODYANOI

The vodyanoi resemble fishy frogs with largely human faces and huge hands. They are excellent craefters of magic and small sorceries: many are dowsers, shamans, or warlocks of one stripe or another, although some are also druids. They are fully amphibian, capable of staying underwater without needing to breathe air and able to stay on dry land for days or weeks, as

long as they can wet down their skins with at least 1 gallon of water per day.

Vodyanoi seem smaller than they truly are because of their hunched and squatting posture, and they rarely seem to stand much more than 4 feet high. Their true size is apparent from their weight, however, as most tip the scales at more than 170 pounds and the fattest among them weigh 300 pounds or more. Their hands and feet are lightly webbed, but their fingers are nimble.

Many vodyanoi worship Palgolak, a god of knowledge and learning who commands his vodyanoi and human followers to learn, to categorize, and to share knowledge. The New Crobuzon Palgolak Library is the best in the city, and its doors are open to all.

Vodyanoi speak Ragamoll in New Crobuzon as well as Fellid Vodyanoi, Lubbock Vodyanoi, Southern Vodyanoi, and many other dialects of their language. Most work near the waterfront. Some are pilots and navigators, but most are stevedores and dockworkers. Their homes are amphibious as well, without internal doors and with huge rooms above and below the water. Sluices refresh the water in them every day, and most connect by canal passageways.

All vodyanoi have some skill at watercraeft, as they refer to elemental water magic. This magic is not as formal as human magic, but is a sort of folkloric magic focused on shamanic channeling and shaping of water energies.

Vodyanoi Racial Traits

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Charisma, –2 Wisdom
- Medium: As Medium creatures, vodyanoi have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.
- Vodyanoi base land speed is 20 feet. Their swimming base speed is 40 feet. Vodyanoi have a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. They can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. Vodyanoi can use the run action while swimming, provided they swim in a straight line.
- Vodyanoi gain a +2 racial saving throw bonus against illusion spells or effects.
- Low-Light Vision.
- Watercraeft: Vodyanoi have the incredible ability to shape water to suit their needs. This ability allows a vodyanoi to affect water as per either the spell *control water* or *stone shape* (but affecting water instead of stone), cast as a sorcerer of a level equal to his class level. A vodyanoi can use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. The durations of these spells changes to concentration + 3 rounds.
- All vodyanoi gain a +1 bonus to the DC of all spells in divination, illusion, conjuration (summoning) or enchantment (charm). The school must be chosen when the character is created.
- +2 racial bonus on Concentration, Jump, and Spellcraft checks. A vodyanoi who merely passes within 5 feet of a water source or permanent spell effect is entitled to a Search check to notice it. This ability does not tell the vodyanoi any details, such as the school, strength, or nature of the spell.
- Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*speak with animals* (aquatic animal only, duration 1 minute). A vodyanoi with a Charisma score of at least 10 also has the following spell-like abilities: 1/day—*jump, longstrider, mending.* Caster level 1st; save DC 10 + vodyanoi's Cha modifier + spell level.
- Automatic Languages: Common and Vodyanoi. Bonus Languages: Cactacae, Druidic, Salt (see the Languages sidebar on page 32).
- Favored Class: Sorcerer.
- Level Adjustment: +1.

Monsters of BAS-LAG

by Wolfgang Baur • illustrated by Andrew Hou and John Gravato

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The world of Bas-Lag is a strange and dangerous place, rife with terrible beasts and deadly environments. While some of the monsters traditionally associated with D&D might find a home in this fantastic world, other wholly unique creatures are far more common and well known. The following are just a sample of the creatures that prowl the face of Bas-Lag, from the comical wyrmen to the utterly alien weavers.

ANOPHELII

The first of the she-anophelii breaks the cover of the trees, running.

Like a woman bent double and then bent again against the grain of her bones, crooked and knotted into a stance subtly wrong. Her neck twisted too far and hard, her long bony shoulders thrown back, her flesh worm-white and her huge eyes open very wide, utterly emaciated, her breasts empty skin rags, her arms outstretched like twists of wire. Her legs judder insanely fast as she runs until she falls forward but does not hit the ground, continues toward them, just above the earth, her arms and legs dangling ungainly and predatory, as (Gods and Jabber) wings open on her back and take her weight, giant mosquito wings, nacreous paddles shudder into motion with that sudden vibrato whine, moving so fast they cannot be seen, and the terrible woman seems borne toward them below a patch of unclear air.

—*The Scar*

FEMALE ANOPHELII **CR 7**

Usually CN Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +4

Languages Anophelii

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 14
(+5 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 78 (12 HD)

Fort +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee bite +13 (1d8+1 plus blood drain/19–20)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +21
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, blood drain, improved grab
Special Actions berserk

Abilities Str 12, Dex 21, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 7, Cha 8
SQ iron grip
Feats Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Overrun, Power Attack
Skills Hide +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +4
Advancement 13–20 HD (Medium); 21–30 HD (Large)

Blood Drain (Ex) A female anophelii drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage in any round it begins its turn grappling a victim. For every point of Constitution drained in this way, the female anophelii gains 5 temporary hit points. For every 4 points of Constitution drained in this way, the female anophelii reduces her base speed by 5 feet and her flying speed by 10 feet. A female anophelii can drain no more than 16 points of Constitution in this way before becoming full. The temporary hit points are lost at a rate of 5 per hour.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a female anophelii must hit an opponent with her bite attack. She can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If she wins the grapple check, she establishes a hold and can drain blood.

Berserk (Ex) Female anophelii are often so starved for blood that they become unthinking and bloodthirsty. Whenever a female anophelii has less than 20 temporary hit points gained from her blood drain ability, she can fly into a rage as a free action. In a rage, an anophelii temporarily gains a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves, but she takes a –2 penalty to Armor Class. The increase in Constitution increases her hit points by 2 points per Hit Die, but these hit points go away at the end of the rage when her Constitution score drops back to normal. These extra hit points are not lost first the way temporary hit points are.

While in a rage, an anophelii cannot use any skills or any abilities that require patience or concentration, nor can she cast spells or activate magic items that require a command word, a spell trigger (such as a wand), or spell completion (such as a scroll) to function. A fit of rage lasts for 5 rounds. An anophelii may prematurely end her rage as a standard action. If she does, the anophelii loses the modifiers and restrictions and becomes fatigued (–2 penalty to Strength, –2 penalty to Dexterity, can't charge or run) for the duration of the current encounter.

Iron Grip (Ex): With their oddly-jointed limbs, anophelii grapple exceptionally well, and gain a +8 racial bonus on all grapple checks.

MALE ANOPHELII **CR 1**
Usually N Medium monstrous humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Anophelii, High Kettai

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 natural)
hp 13 (3 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee dagger +1 (1d4–2/19–20)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +9

Abilities Str 7, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 10
SQ iron grip
Feats Magical Aptitude, Nimble Fingers
Skills Disable Device +9, Knowledge (arcane) +9, Knowledge (history) +9, Open Locks +6, Spot +1, Use Magic Device +6
Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** sorcerer

Iron Grip (Ex): With their oddly-jointed limbs, anophelii grapple exceptionally well and gain a +8 racial bonus on all grapple checks.

The anophelii are a race of mosquitofolk who once ruled a rapacious empire in the tropics; the women are insatiably hungry for warm blood and only rational when their hunger has been slaked. The wingless anophelii menfolk are excellent linguists, engineers, and sorcerers, capable of deciphering ancient magic and reconstructing rituals that have not been performed in eons.

Strategies and Tactics

The female anophelii are perpetually hungry and attack any warm-blooded creature that enters their territory. They charge any source of food, drain it dry as quickly as possible, and leave to digest their meals. The remnants they leave behind are often so dried and desiccated that they appear mummified or even imploded. Female anophelii much prefer to charge from ambush, using treelines or other cover to approach their prey.

Male anophelii avoid combat whenever possible, preferring to flee at the first sign of conflict.

Ecology

Male anophelii are smaller than the females of the species, sharing the same large eyes, white skin and dangling arms. There the resemblance ends.

Male anophelii lack the strength, bloodlust, and ferocity of the females, and they lack wings. Instead, they have excellent memories, strong mechano-magical skills, and sharply inquisitive minds. They eat only vegetable matter and (rarely) flesh, but never blood.

The great tragedy of the anophelii race is that the men and women can barely communicate with each other; the species is split by their separate needs, and the few anophelii still known to live in the southern oceans are restricted to a single island, where access is strictly controlled by the bloodless cactacae.

Anophelii speak their own high-pitched language and most males also read and write in High Kettai. The mouths of male anophelii are round and fleshy and resemble sphincters; they are incapable of forming the syllables of High Kettai (although they do know how to read and write it), Ragamoll, Salt,

and related languages. Their own language sounds like puffs of air.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Female anophelii typically stand about 5 feet tall with equally broad wings protruding from their backs. When thirsty, they weigh around 100 pounds, but a full female might weigh as much as double that amount. Male anophelii are only about 4 feet tall and weigh only 90 pounds on average.

Alignment: Female anophelii are so driven by hunger that other concerns are purely secondary, making most of them chaotic neutral. Males prefer a balance in all things, making them neutral.

Treasure: None, although the lairs of female anophelii often contain the remnants of previous meals. The male anophelii sometimes have a relic or two from long ago, but they rarely work and are almost never understood.

GARUDA

The great creature stood more than six feet tall, on cruel clawed feet that poked out from under a dirty cloak. The ragged cloth dangled down almost to the ground, draped loosely over every inch of flesh, obscuring the details of physiognomy and musculature, all but the garuda's head. And that great inscrutable bird face gazed down at Isaac with what looked like imperiosity. Its sharply curved beak was something between a kestrel and an owls'. Sleek feathers faded subtly from ochre to dun and dappled brown. Deep black eyes stared at his own, the iris only a fine mottling at the very edge of the dark. Those eyes were set in orbits which gave the garuda face a permanent sneer, a proud furrow.

And looming over the garuda's head, covered in the rough sackcloth it clasped about itself, projected the unmistakable shapes of its huge furled wings, promontories of feather and skin and bone that extended two feet or more from its shoulders and curved elegantly toward each other. Isaac had never seen a garuda spread its wings at close quarters, but he had read descriptions of the dust-cloud they could raise, and the vast shadows they threw across the garuda's prey below.

—Perdido Street Station

GARUDA **CR 1**

Usually CN Medium humanoid (garuda)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +6

Languages Garuda, Ragamoll

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 13 (3 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1, +2 against spells with the Chaos descriptor

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +4 (1d4+2)

Melee longspear +4 (1d8+3/x3)

Ranged composite shortbow +5 (1d8+2/x3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, vertical strike

Abilities Str 14, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

SQ chaos resistance, hunter's eyes

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Skills Hide +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +4*

Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** ranger

Vertical Strike (Ex) Garuda gain double the normal range increment when firing straight down from at least 30 feet overhead. If the attack roll is successful, they also gain a +2 bonus on damage rolls.

Chaos Resistance (Ex) Garuda are either the products of chaos magic or have simply lived near it and with it long enough to build up a tolerance. Either way, spells and abilities with the Chaos descriptor do not affect them as easily, and they gain a +2 racial bonus against effects such as those generated by the Cacotopic Stain and outsiders with the chaotic subtype.

Hunter's Eyes (Ex) Garuda can see their foes from a great distance in the air. They gain a +8 racial bonus on Spot checks in daylight hours made while flying.

A race of desert birdfolk, the Garuda are proud and noble hunters, spending most of their time engaging in a hunt or performing other vital tasks for their tribe.

Strategies and Tactics

Garuda are masters of hunting targets from the air. To this end, they use dropped and ranged weapons, and they often glide into position silently, gaining complete surprise. They land only when injured or to finish off their prey.

When hunting, garuda use composite bows, spears, longspears, and whips. Their typical prey includes birds as well as earthbound animals.

Ecology

The garuda possess powerful claws, hollow bones, excellent eyesight, and a great love of freedom. Their tribal society is completely egalitarian and rarely has any need of city-made goods or customs; they do not use money or pray to deities or spirits. Most live in

the Cymek desert, while others dwell in the north of Shotek and the west of Mordiga. The Cymek garuda include a librarian clan who travels with trunks containing thousands of volumes, many of them otherwise lost. A tent city springs up around this clan's center of learning wherever it lands, and other clans bring them books and other goods.

Those garuda who go to cities are often confined to ghettos. Garuda in New Crobuzon dwell in a region called Spatters, on the distant outskirts of the city, at the top of tower blocks refitted with perches and nesting space open to the sky.

Garuda follow their own strange legal code. To them, denial of choice is the moral compass that determines criminal action, and all crimes are the same crime, called "choice-theft." Any garuda who murders, rapes, or enslaves another is guilty of the blackest crime and is typically exiled from the tribe after his or her wings are cut off. Few survive the desert long in this condition.

Garuda speak Common and their own language of piping, raucous sounds. Residing in the higher registers, Garuda cannot be spoken by human voices.

Typical Physical Charactistics: Garuda typically stand just over 6 feet tall and weigh between 100 and 150 pounds. Although their skin color is most commonly a wash of tan their feathers can vary wildly from gray and white to brown and tan.

Alignment: As staunch supporters of the freedom of choice, most garuda are chaotic neutral.

Treasure: Typical garuda carry with them only what they need to survive and rarely anything of any value to those outside their society. Any treasure they do carry is often made to enhance their combat prowess or is a token of a memorable hunt.

For Player Characters

Most garuda never leave the Cymek desert, and those who do are often "abstract individuals," as the garuda call exiles. Others are more familiar with human customs, such as the ghetto garuda of New Crobuzon. These garuda are rarely well-off, and only the strongest or cleverest escape their low origins. All garuda make excellent scouts and trackers. Their favored class is ranger.

All garuda prefer the open sky and find buildings and underground structures completely repellant.

Garuda Base Traits: Garuda have the following base racial traits.

—Medium size.

—+2 natural armor.

—Racial Hit Dice: A garuda begins with three levels of humanoid (garuda), which provide 3d8 Hit Dice, a base attack bonus of +2, and base saving throw modifiers of Fort +1, Ref +3, and Will +1.

—Garuda base land speed is 30 feet. They also have a fly speed of 40 feet with average maneuverability.

—Natural Weapons: 2 claw attacks (1d4).

—Attack Options: Vertical strike (see statistics).

—Str +4, Dex +6, Cha –2.

—Special Qualities: Chaos resistance, hunter's eyes (see statistics).

—Racial Feats: A garuda's humanoid levels give it two feats.

—Racial Skills: A garuda's humanoid levels give it skill points equal to 6 x (2 + Int modifier). Its class skills are Hide, Move Silently, and Spot.

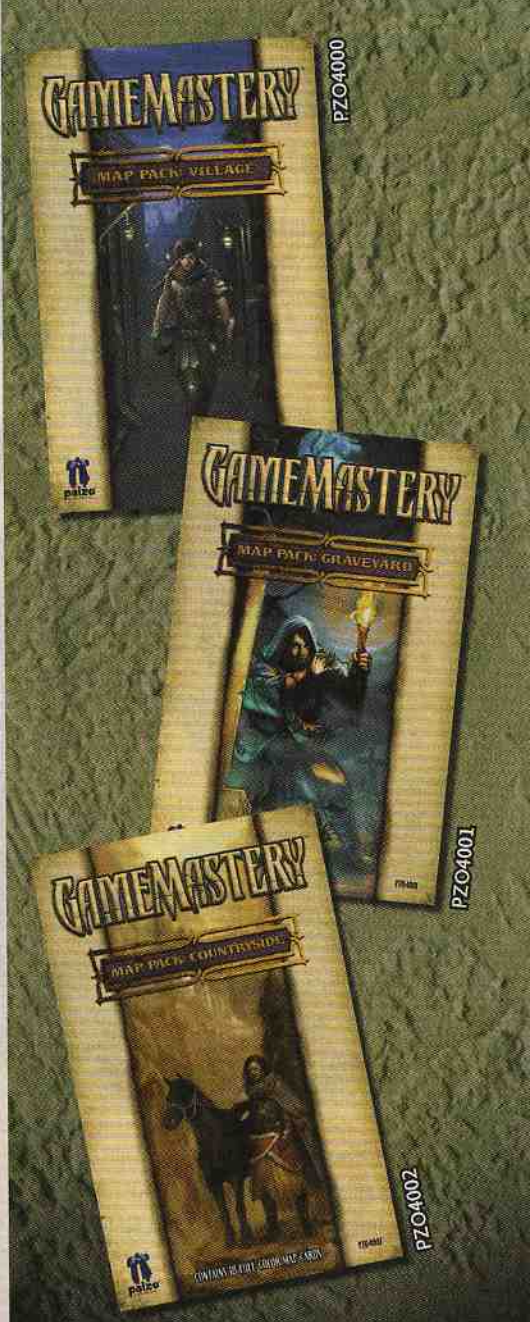
—Level adjustment +1.

GRINDYLOW

They jutted prognathous jaws, their bulging teeth frozen in meaningless grimaces, massive eyes absolutely dark and unblinking. Their arms and chests were humanoid, tightly ridged with muscles and stretched skin, grey-green and black, shiny as if with mucus. And narrowing at the waist, the grindylow bodies extended like enormous eels into flat tails several times longer than their torsos.

The grindylow swam in the air. They flickered, sending quick S-curves down the lengths of their extended tails, rippling them liquidly. They moved their arms in a random dance, like submerged swimmers controlling their buoyancy, clenching and unclenching their webbed claws.

—The Scar



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WOLFGANG BAUR

GRINDYLOW **CR 6**

Usually NE Large aberration (aquatic)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +11

Languages Grindylow, Ragamoll

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (–1 size, +8 natural)

hp 65 (10 HD)

Immune cold

SR 16

Fort +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 10 ft. (perfect), swim 50 ft.

Melee tail slam +11 (1d8+7) and 2 claws +9 (2d4+5)

Ranged trident +6 (2d6+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +16

Atk Options Combat Expertise

Spells Known (CL 5th)

2nd (5/day)—*darkness, detect thoughts* (DC 14)

1st (7/day)—*chill touch* (DC 13), *hypnotism* (DC 13), *mage armor, magic missile*

0 (6/day)—*detect magic, mage hand, ghost sound, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic*

Abilities Str 20, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 14

SQ amphibious, levitation

Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Multiattack

Skills Concentration +11, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcane) +7, Listen +11, Sense Motive +5, Spot +11, Swim +13

Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** sorcerer

Spellcasting (Sp) A standard grindylow casts spells as a 5th-level sorcerer.

Amphibious (Ex) Grindylow can survive indefinately on land.

Levitation (Su) When out of water, grindylow "swim" through the air by levitating their bulky bodies and using their long eel-like tails to wriggle horizontally. This ability grants them a fly speed of 10 feet with perfect maneuverability.

The grindylow are an amphibious race of sorcerers and thaumaturges who pay obeisance to ancient gods forgotten by the rest of the world. They completely rule the Cold Claw Sea and the Gengris lands that surround it and rarely allow visitors of any kind to pass through their territories. Their paranoia means their borders are well-defended by traps, magical currents, and land-based fortifications. Within their domain, they treat other species as chattel, using them for their own strange purposes.

The grindylow are euryhalinic, able to live and breathe in either fresh water or salt. They speak Ragamoll and their own liquid language.

Strategies and Tactics

Grindylow rarely initiate combat unless they are defending their home territories in the Cold Claw Sea. There they often attack ships and travelers, trying to capture slaves and experimental subjects. To get unmarked and uninjured victims, they try to intimidate their targets into surrender rather than attacking straight out. In many cases, their fearsome reputation is enough to make some humans and others surrender without a fight or offer up a few of their number in order to spare the rest.

Ecology

Little is known about grindylow society, as few outsiders ever return from their lands. It is generally agreed upon that powerful grindylow sorcerers who call themselves magi rule them. These magi are said to construct *figurines of wondrous power* to hold a portion of their magic. When outside their native lands, the grindylow often function as part of a raiding party, bent upon achieving some greater goal. This party is always led by a magi who makes most of the decisions.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Grindylow range in length from 9 to 12 feet long, most of which is taken up by their powerful tail. The typical adult weighs approximately 600 pounds.

Alignment: As a race of creatures with little care for the lives of others, especially when they conflict with their goals, the grindylow are typically neutral evil.

Treasure: Grindylow are often festooned with various magic items and special weapons but rarely carry coins or other monetary treasure.

HANDLINGER

There were five right hands and five left, their tails coiling and uncoiling, their skin mottled and thick.

The humans and xenians and the dog shuffled closer. They made a tight circle.

At a signal from Rescue, the thick tails emerged from the flesh of the hosts with a viscous plopping. Each of the humans, the vodyanoi and khepri and dog, jerked a little and faltered, their mouths falling

open spastically, their eyes flickering neurotically in their heads. The entry wounds began to ooze as sluggish and thick as resin. The blood-wet tails waved blindly in the air for a moment like massive worms. They stretched out and quivered as they touched one another.

The host bodies were bending in toward each other, as if whispering in some strange huddled greeting. They were utterly still.

The handlingers communed.

—Perdido Street Station

HANDLINGER **CR 3***

Always LE Tiny aberration (symbiont)

Init +3; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Ragamoll; telepathy 60 ft.

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 15 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 33 (6 HD); **DR** 5/silver

SR 16

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares)

Melee tail whip +9 (1d3–2 plus paralysis)

Space 2–1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6

Atk Options improved grab, paralyzing touch

Special Actions ride flesh, spitsear

Spell-like Abilities (CL 6th)

At will—*detect magic, detect thoughts* (DC 14), *levitate*

Abilities Str 6, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 15, Ego 19

SQ enhance host, symbiont traits

Feats Persuasive, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +9, Climb +10, Concentration +9, Hide +15, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcane) +10, Move Silently +7, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +8, Use Magic Device +8

Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** sorcerer

Blindsight (Ex) A handlinger is blind, but its entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration. This ability enables it to discern objects and creatures within 60 feet. The handlinger usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight. A handlinger attached to a creature shares its sensory input with the host, conferring blindsight on the host.

Telepathy (Su) Handlingers can communicate telepathically with their host bodies and other handlingers within 60 feet. Sinistral handlingers can also use this telepathy to override the link between dextrier handlingers and their hosts, effectively locking a dextrier out of its host body.

Paralyzing Touch (Ex) A successful tail whip attack injects a powerful sedative that paralyzes its victim for long enough for the handlinger to assume control of a host. Unless the victim makes a successful DC 16 Fortitude save, it is paralyzed for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a handlinger must hit an opponent of up to Large size with a tail whip attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to ride flesh. The handlinger's grapple score includes a +12 racial bonus.

Ride flesh (Su) A handlinger can dig into a living creature's body, slipping its wormlike tail into flesh, while the hand-shaped portion of its body remains outside its host, often hidden in a purse, pouch, or under a scarf or a fold of flesh, such as the groin or underarm. The process requires a single round. Incorporeal creatures and creatures immune to critical hits are immune to this ability.

Once a handlinger has dug into its victim, it controls the host's actions. If there is a conflict between the symbiont and the host, the host must make a DC 19 Will save (equal to the handlinger's Ego score if it is greater than 19) to ignore the handlinger's control. If the save fails, the handlinger has complete control of the host body for 1 day. If the host succeeds, it must continue to make this save once per round until it fails or the handlinger is removed. While attached, the handlinger uses the host's physical ability scores instead of its own. It can use any of the host's skills, feats, spells, and other abilities. The handlinger also has access to all of the host's memories and knowledge. The host gains the handlinger's spell resistance, but it does not gain its damage reduction. A handlinger can remain attached indefinitely and can even leave the body and return to it. Leaving and returning requires the handlinger to spend no more than 1 hour apart from its host, after which time the host regains control of itself.

Over time (usually 2d4 weeks), the handlinger overloads the victim's nervous system, crippling the victim. It then animates the victim's body, effectively acting as the host's nervous system. In this state, when the handlinger is not attached, the host's

Dexterity is 0 and can only be restored to normal through the use of *heal*, *restoration*, or similar spells.

The handlinger's host loses 1 point of Constitution per month, which does not heal naturally and can only be restored by magical means. A successful DC 15 Fortitude save negates this ability drain. Most handlingers abandon their hosts before the bodies become too weak to be serviceable, but a few find magical means of preserving an especially favored host.

A handlinger can abandon a host body as a full-round action that deals 1d6 points of damage to the host. A handlinger can be forced to abandon the body by a *dispel evil* spell (the caster must succeed on a DC 18 caster level check to expel the handlinger, which deals damage as described above) or a *heal* or *limited wish* spell (which automatically succeeds and causes no damage to the host). The death of the host body does not harm the handlinger, although it is automatically expelled from the host body and stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Spitsear (Su) A dextrier handlinger can force its host to breathe acidic fire in a 30-foot cone for 3d6 points of fire damage and 3d6 points of acid damage once every 1d4 rounds. A DC 14 Reflex save results in half damage. The save DC is Constitution-based, depending upon the score of the host.

Enhance Host (Su) A dextrier handlinger greatly enhances the power of its host body, granting it a +6 enhancement bonus to Strength and the ability to fly at a speed of 60 feet with good maneuverability.

Symbiont Traits While attached to a host, a symbiont acts on its host's turn each round, regardless of its own initiative modifier. It is not flat-footed unless its host is, and it is aware of any danger its host is aware of. If clearly visible, opponents can attack the symbiont instead of its host creature. This works the same way as attacking an object. The symbiont gains the benefit of the host's Dexterity modifier to AC instead of its own, and gains any deflection bonus to AC the host has as well. Its own size modifier and natural armor bonus apply. Attacking a symbiont instead of its host provokes an attack of opportunity from the host.

A symbiont never takes damage from attacks directed at the host. Like a worn magic item, a symbiont is usually unaffected by spells that damage a host, but if the host rolls a 1 on its saving throw, the symbiont is one of the "items" that can be affected by the spell. A symbiont uses its host's base saving throw bonuses if they are better than its own.

Any spell the host creature casts on itself automatically affects the symbiont. Additionally, the host may cast a spell with a target of "you" on the symbiont instead of on itself. The symbiont may do likewise with any spells or spell-like abilities it uses. The host and the symbiont can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the host or the symiont's type. Spells targeted on the host by another spellcaster do not affect the symbiont.

Skills Handlingers use their Dexterity bonus rather than Strength for Climb and Jump checks.

CR* When unattached, a handlinger's CR is 3, but when attached to a host, its CR depends upon the host creature. When a sinistral handlinger is attached to a host, it is equal to the host's CR. A dextrier handlinger attached to a host has a CR equal to the host's CR +2.

Handlingers are a half-mythical race of parasites that live by infection, overwhelming their hosts' minds, controlling their bodies, and granting them eldritch powers. The process is irreversible and is so feared that handlingers live hidden lives, controlling their hosts without anyone the wiser. When found out, they often flee into the shadows, always on the look out for a new host to control. All other species hate and fear the handlingers, except those few New Crobuzon politicians who shelter them in return for favors.

Strategies and Tactics

Handlingers use their hosts to fight, utilizing all of their abilities in addition to those possessed by the host. If those bodies become too heavily wounded, the handlingers abandon them and seek new hosts. In fights against foes unaware of the handlingers' true nature, it is entirely possible the host is slain and yet its handlinger survives to exact revenge at some later time.

Ecology

Handlingers come in two forms: dextrier (or right-handed) and sinistral (or left-handed). Each type has its own purpose: the sinistrals are the nobles and rulers, clever in strategy. The dextriers provide muscle—stronger in combat and able to grant their host bodies a powerful breath weapon. When the two types meet, dextriers always defer to sinistrals because of the sinistral's ability to lock dextriers out of host bodies.

Handlingers speak the languages of their hosts and a secret tactile language that requires them to touch another of their species, but which allows them to share information completely and without error.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Physically, handlingers are large, strong hands with four fingers, a hooked thumb and a powerful whip-like tail. They insert their tails into their hosts and override their nervous systems. They weigh no more than 5 pounds.

Alignment: As a race of creatures more concerned with their own existence than the well-being of their hosts, handlingers are almost universally lawful evil.

Treasure: Aside from the gear and wealth carried by their host creatures, handlingers do not carry any treasure (not even rings).

SCABMETTLER

The scabmettlers were carving furrows in their own flesh.

The fighter right before Bellis was tracing the outlines of his muscles in wicked strokes. He hooked the knife under the skin of his shoulder, then curled around with surgical precision, drawing a red line that linked deltoids and biceps.

The blood seemed to hesitate for a second, then to blossom, an eructation of it, bursting out from the fissure like boiling water, pouring out of him in great gouts, as if the pressure in his veins was immeasurably greater than in Bellis'. It raced across the man's skin in a macabre slick, and he turned his arm expertly this way and that, channeling his own blood according to some design Bellis could not see.

—The Scar

SCABMETTLER **CR 4**

Usually LN Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +5

Languages Salt

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18 (+8 natural [clot armor])

hp 39 (6 HD); seal wounds

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares, 30 ft. base)

Melee scimitar +10 (1d8+4/18–20)

Melee unarmed strike +9 (1d3+3 nonlethal)

Melee spiked armor +9 (1d6+3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9

Atk Options Power Attack, quickset disarm

Abilities Str 16, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13

SQ clot armor, clot tools, eldritch form

Feats Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Climb +4, Concentration +10, Profession (sailor) +4, Spot +5, Swim +7

Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** fighter

Seal Wounds (Su) Scabmettlers are very difficult to kill with piercing or slashing attacks, as their wounds seal instantly. Piercing weapons do half damage. Slashing attacks always deal the minimum damage possible.

Quickset Disarm (Su) Whenever a scabmettler is cut by a slashing or piercing weapon, his blood coagulates around the weapon almost instantly, giving the scabmettler an attack of opportunity that can be used to disarm the foe. This is a normal disarm attempt; if it succeeds, the weapon is torn from its owner's grasp and remains embedded in the scabmettler's armor. If the attempt fails, the target may not attempt to disarm the scabmettler in return. Weapons stuck in this way can later be torn free with a successful grapple check (or a DC 15 Strength check if the scabmettler is dead or willing).

Clot Armor (Su) By carving their own flesh with skinning knives after washing themselves with the yellow blodfrey infusion that slows the clotting, scabmettlers can create clot armor. This requires a successful Concentration roll (DC 10 + the AC bonus to be granted—maximum +8) and grants the scabmettler a natural armor bonus. The bonus may be up to +8, but this counts as heavy armor and imposes a maximum Dexterity bonus of +0. Clot armor that grants a +6 natural armor bonus or less (with a maximum Dexterity bonus of +2) acts as medium armor. Clot armor that grants a +4 natural armor bonus or less (with a maximum Dexterity bonus of +5) acts as light armor. This armor is always considered spiked (see page 124 of the *Player's Handbook*) and scabmettlers are proficient in its use. The process of creating clot armor takes 2 rounds and deals 1 point of damage per point of natural armor created. The clot armor lasts for 3d6 hours. Clot armor reduces a scabmettler's speed as armor of its type, and imposes an arcane spell failure chance equal to 5% per point of natural armor. Scabmettlers cannot use this ability while wearing armor or other heavy clothing.

Clot Tools (Su) Scabmettlers can use their blood to create simple tools such as hammers, spikes, and hooks. Creating these tools is a standard action that requires a DC 15 Concentration check. Each check deals 1d4 points of damage to the scabmettler. These tools last for 1d6 hours.

Eldritch Form (Su) Divinations reveal scabmettlers have a faint transmutation magic even when their powers are not in use, and these powers are inheritable among scabmettlers. Scabmettlers cannot interbreed with other humanoid races.

Skills All scabmettlers gain a +4 racial bonus on the Concentration skill.

The scabmettlers are a race of warriors who use their magical blood to create armor and other tools. They are a stolid, unexcitable lot, much given to silence and patience.

Most scabmettlers live on Armada, the floating pirate city, in the Shaddler riding. In Bas-Lag, scabmettlers must regularly drink a concoction from an herb called Blodfrey. If they do not, they sometimes suffer a massive "all-clot" attack, which coagulates all the blood in their bodies at once. This kills them instantly, leaving only a hardened, twisted statue.

Scabmettlers speak Salt.

Strategies and Tactics

Scabmettlers enjoy both ritual gladiatorial combats and the rough-and-tumble mob combat of piracy. They fight best in groups of their own kind, and they cooperate among themselves

to take down dangerous foes. They practice a form of fighting science called mortu crutt, also called stamp-fighting, which uses feints, sweeps, and strokes to knock down and incapacitate a foe. The use of mortu crutt can be ostentatious and elaborate during a gladiatorial contest, or quick and brutal during a boarding action.

Ecology

As a race, the scabmettlers are not unlike most other humanoids, prone to living together in small families grouped with others of their kind. They spend much of their time practicing their fighting arts and hone them for the Blood Day contests, when fighting festivals are held. The victors are heroes among the scabmettlers and others in Armada. Betting on these events is typically heavy.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Scabmettler skin is a blanched gray, and their bodies are slightly more squat and strong than those of humans. Ritual scarification marks their faces, arms, chests, and legs; only the portion of their backs they cannot reach themselves is unmarked. When wearing their clot armor, scabmettlers are covered in protrusions up to several inches long of swiftly clotted blood, black and blue and blood-brown. The form of this blood is crystalline and spiky. Each pattern of armor is unique to the warrior who creates it; some prefer heavy armor while others prefer the speed allowed by light armor.

Alignment: Most scabmettlers have a strong belief in honor and the rule of law, but their warrior natures leave many cold to the plight of others. As such, most scabmettlers are lawful neutral.

Treasure: Scabmettlers carry standard treasure for a creature of their CR, normally in weapons, coins, jewels, or other valuables.

SLAKE MOTH

A terrible shape squeezed and folded in on itself to push its organic folds and spines and bulk through the little window. A blunt eyeless head poked itself through the opening and turned slowly from side to side. The impression was of an impossible birth. The thing that loomed through the space in the glass had made itself small and intricate by contracting in invisible, impossible directions. It shimmered unreally under the strain, hauling its glistening carcass through the opening, arms emerging from its dark bulk to push and strain against the window frame.

Behind the glass those half-hidden wings boiled. The creature pushed suddenly and the window disintegrated.

—Perdido Street Station

SLAKE MOTH **CR 9**

Always NE Large aberration

Init +6; **Senses** Listen +16, Spot +16

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural)

hp 110 (13 HD)

Immune psionics

Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +15 (2d6+7) and tongue +13 (1d8+7/mind rot)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +20

Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack, mind rot

Abilities Str 24, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 12

SQ hypnotic wings, impossible bulk, induce nightmares

Feats Ability Focus (hypnotic wings), Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack

Skills Listen +16, Spot +16

Advancement 14–22 HD (Large), 23–39 HD (Huge)

Mind Rot (Su) On a successful critical hit with its tongue attack, a slake moth's prehensile tongue slithers into its victim's brain and begins sucking out the consciousness. This deals 1d3 points of Wisdom and Charisma drain per round.

Hypnotic Wings (Su) Any creature viewing the unfurled wings of a slake moth is paralyzed for 1d4 rounds unless he makes a successful DC 19 Will save. Creatures can avoid viewing the wings as they could a gaze attack (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 294), but due to the shimmering colors, the chance of not having to make a saving throw is only 30% rather than the usual 50%. Viewing the wings through mirrors avoids their hypnotic powers. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Impossible Bulk (Su) A slake moth can fold its enormous bulk through spaces that seem much too small for it. It can pass through spaces as small as 2 feet by 2 feet, folding its wings, bones, skull, and sheer bulk through the tiny opening. This move requires a standard action.

Induce Nightmares (Su) The presence of slake moths within 1/2 mile of a sleeping creature resonates on the level of dreams and desires, inducing a fitful sleep full of elaborate fantasies and lurid imagery. Victims of a single night of such agitated sleep must make a DC 17 Will save or become fatigued. This save DC increases by 1 each night of continuous exposure. Failing a second saving throw results in exhaustion. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Slake-moths are creatures with strange nutritional needs: they feed on sentience in the form of dreams, guilt, lusts, and worries. Consummate hunters and stealthy assassins, a small group of slake moths can turn an entire metropolis into a nightmare of ruined dreams and comatose victims in a matter of weeks.

Strategies and Tactics

Slake moths prefer to hunt rich territories full of sentient creatures. Cities are their natural hunting grounds, but to avoid being burnt out or hunted themselves, they prefer to disguise their presence, attacking only solitary individuals or (if multiple slake moths are hunting together) small groups. They are strictly nocturnal.

Ecology

After hatching from small, brightly colored eggs, slake-moths live in a larval form, eating a special narcotic and other solidified forms of dream-matter. Their eggs are extremely rare and are believed to come from

a place called the Fractured Land, on the far side of the Scar.

When the larvae grow as large as cats, they spin cocoons and soon assume their adult forms. This form is unlike any real moth—the size of a horse with a prehensile tongue, slab-teeth, deep sunken hollows that are anchors for antennae that serve it in place of eyes, and two wings patterned with ever-shifting but perfectly reflected patterns. They have six legs, a varying number of clawed arms, and many smaller, dark appendages along their sides, like whips or enormous cilia.

Some savants suggest their origins are on a plane of dream; others believe they are a species vomited forth by the Cacotopic Stain.

They do not speak.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Although the size of their bulk is subject to frequent change, an adult slake moth typically stands 8 to 9 feet tall and weighs nearly 800 pounds.

Alignment: A slake moth's only desire is to feed at the expense of all other living sentient creatures nearby, making almost all of them neutral evil.

Treasure: While slake moths themselves do not value treasure, their lairs are frequently littered with the remains of their meals, which often contain coins, gear, and other small trinkets.

MIRRORED HELMET

In order to properly handle the deadly slake moths, those who hoped to use them developed specialized mirrored helmets that allowed the wearer to see through a complicated series of mirrors. While some of these helmets were made for Remade who had their heads turned around, more complicated versions exist that allow a normal person to look forward. Anyone wearing a mirrored helmet is immune to the slake moth's hypnotic wings but takes a –4 penalty on Spot and Search checks as well as a –2 penalty on all attack rolls. These penalties double if the helmet is made to look behind the wearer.

Weight 4 lb.; Cost 30 brass shekels (equal to gp).

WEAVER

The weaver's bulk was mostly its huge teardrop abdomen that welled up and hung downwards behind it from its neck-waist, a tight, bulbous fruit seven feet long and five wide. It was absolutely taut and smooth, its chitin a shimmering black iridescence.

The creature's head was the size of a man's chest. It was suspended from the front of the abdomen a third of the way from the top. The fat curve of its body loomed above it like skulking black-clad shoulders.

—Perdido Street Station

WEAVER **CR 15**

Always CN Large outsider (chaotic)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +15, Spot +18

Aura fear (10 ft., DC 21)

Languages Ragamoll; telepathy 60 ft.

AC 28, touch 13, flat-footed 24; Dodge, Mobility
(–1 size, +4 Dex, +15 natural)

hp 153 (18 HD); **DR** 10/lawful

Fort +15, **Ref** +15, **Will** +14

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee 4 claws +24 (2d10+6/18–20/x3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +28
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Spring Attack, augmented critical, decapitate, impale
Special Actions chaos chatter
Spell-like Abilities (CL 18th) 3/day—*cloak of chaos*, quickened *dimension door*, *word of chaos* (DC 24) At will—*blink*, *dimension door*, *plane shift* (DC 22)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 19, Con 19, Int 23, Wis 17, Cha 24
SQ chain of consequences, unfettered
Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*dimension door*), Spring Attack
Skills Balance +19, Climb +16, Concentration +25, Disable Device +19, Escape Artist +22, Hide +23, Intimidate +25, Jump +25, Knowledge (arcane) +27, Knowledge (history) +27, Knowledge (the planes) +27, Listen +15, Move Silently +22, Sense Motive +24, Sleight of Hand +15, Spellcraft +27, Spot +18
Advancement 19–30 HD (Large), 31–54 HD (Huge)

Fear Aura (Su) A creature in the area must succeed on a DC 21 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell (caster level 15th). The weaver can suppress or resume this aura as a free action.

Augmented Critical (Ex) A weaver's claws are incredibly sharp. They threaten a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 18–20, dealing triple damage on a successful critical hit. A weaver's claws are not subject to effects such as *keen edge* that would further improve their threat range.

Decapitate (Ex) A weaver's bladed claws can decapitate a foe. Upon a successful critical hit, the claw severs the opponent's head (if it has one) from its body. Some creatures, such as many aberrations and all oozes, have no heads. Others, such as golems and undead creatures other than vampires, are not affected by the loss of their heads. Most other creatures, however, die when their heads are cut off.

Impale (Ex) If the weaver strikes successfully with two or more of its claws, it may automatically make a grapple check to grip and hold the creature in its claws. If the grapple succeeds, the weaver can deal 4d10+6 points of damage the following round with a successful grapple check.

Chaos Chatter (Su) The speech of a weaver is disorienting and maddening. As a standard action, the weaver can spout its madness to all within the range of its telepathy. Those who hear it must make a DC 26 Will saving throw or become dazed for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Chain of Consequences (Su) A weaver can see the future effects of particular actions more clearly than most, although this is not exactly prophecy and a weaver rarely tells anyone of these visions. Weavers can often force a particular vision to come to pass by pulling on the strings and levers behind the visible, everyday existence. This work generally requires 2d4 hours and is equivalent to a *limited wish* spell cast by an 18th-level wizard. Note that very small effects, such as duplicating a spell of 2nd-level or lower can be performed in only 1 round, but most other effects require more time.

Unfettered (Su) Weavers are only partially on our plane of existence and can move about without regard for gravity or other impediments. As such, they can fly with perfect maneuverability and are never slowed by terrain, webs, walls, or slick surfaces.

Weavers resemble enormous spiders with sharp clawed legs ending in 18-inch-long talons, eight red eyes (two of them much larger than the others), and tiny black hands resembling those of human children. Their claws include sharpened curls of chitin to snag and hold prey for dissection.

Weaver limbs move precisely and delicately, like those of a dancer or surgeon. No motion is wasted. Their mouthparts are enormous and insectoid, with an inner and outer jaw, mandibles, and a wet black gullet; somehow, they are capable of forming human speech without impediment.

Strategies and Tactics

Weavers enjoy combat. They seem to see attacks coming, counter quickly, and use their Spring Attack, *dimension door*, and *blink* abilities to pop in and out of the battlefield. They are entirely capable of shifting locations to strike from above, behind, and from range, when the whim strikes them.

Weavers are deadly and entirely unpredictable foes. Each has its foibles, fetishes, and habits. None can truly be predicted based on the actions of its peers.

Ecology

The weavers are outsiders with an overdeveloped sense of aesthetics. They see the world as a spider's web, and each action, event, or thing as a

thread. This alone might not be so strange, but weavers have opinions about what might make the web prettier and the power to rearrange the world to fit their vision. With a mystical understanding of the consequences, they can weave the world to their liking.

Weavers rarely speak to humanoids unless bribed. The forms these bribes take vary from weaver to weaver, and their tastes change over time. One month they might rabidly collect chess sets, the next month they lust for scissors made of paper or the perfectly polished shells of vineyard snails. Offering the wrong gift or forgetting to bring one is often fatal.

Weavers speak Common and many other languages, but they speak in such a babbling stream of consciousness that it is often difficult to divine their meaning.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Weavers stand roughly 9 feet tall and are equally wide. While much of their bulk is made up of their abdomen, their legs are incredibly long. Weavers weigh up to 1,200 pounds, but since they are not bound by gravity, they can exert as little weight as they like on a surface.

Alignment: As all weavers possess a totally alien mindset of pure chaos, all weavers are chaotic neutral.

Treasure: Weavers very rarely carry any treasure, unless their current fixation happens to be valuable.

WYRMEN

There was a knock at the window. He rose and paced over to it.

A small scarlet idiot face grinned at Isaac from outside. Two stubby horns jutted from its prominent chin, ridges and knobs of bone unconvincingly imitated a hairline. Watery eyes gazed above an ugly cheerful grin…

"Evening, Teafortwo. You got my message." The creature flapped its red batwings.

Teafortwo was a wyrman. Barrel-chested creatures like squat birds, with thick arms like a human dwarf's below those ugly, functional wings, the wyrmen ploughed the skies of New Crobuzon. Their hands were their feet, those arms jutting from the bottom of their squat bodies like crows' legs. They could pace a few clumsy steps here and there balancing on their palms, … but they preferred to careen over the city, yelling and swooping and screaming abuse at passers-by.

—Perdido Street Station

WYRMEN **CR 1/3**

Often CN Small monstrous humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Listen –2, Spot –2

Languages Ragamoll

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Dodge (+1 size, +3 natural)

hp 5 (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 30 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +2 (1d3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +1; **Grp** –3

Abilities Str 10, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 7, Cha 9

SQ aerial tumble

Feats Dodge

Skills Perform (comedy) +1, Tumble +6

Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** rogue

Aerial Tumble (Ex) Wyrmen may be clumsy in the air, but their erratic flight allows them to avoid blows and other dangers. Wyrmen are not slowed when using the Tumble skill while flying.

Skills All wyrmen receive a +4 racial bonus on Tumble skill checks.

Wyrmen are aerial clowns and messengers in the skies of Bas-Lag. They are a stupid but genial race, happy to serve, happy to fart, and happy to frown and laugh as the mood takes them. In New Crobuzon, they are typically messengers, couriers, and spies for scientists and thaumaturges. Some believe they serve as familiars, but if so, no one can prove it.

Strategies and Tactics

Wyrmen are not especially tough combatants and prefer to harass, tease, and annoy rather than engage in serious bloodletting. They tend to flee as soon as they are wounded.

Ecology

Wyrmen congregate with others of their kind for protection, entertainment, and general play through the skies. Wyrmen nest under eaves and on rooftops near the warmth of chimneys, or in abandoned tenements and warehouses with easy access to the sky.

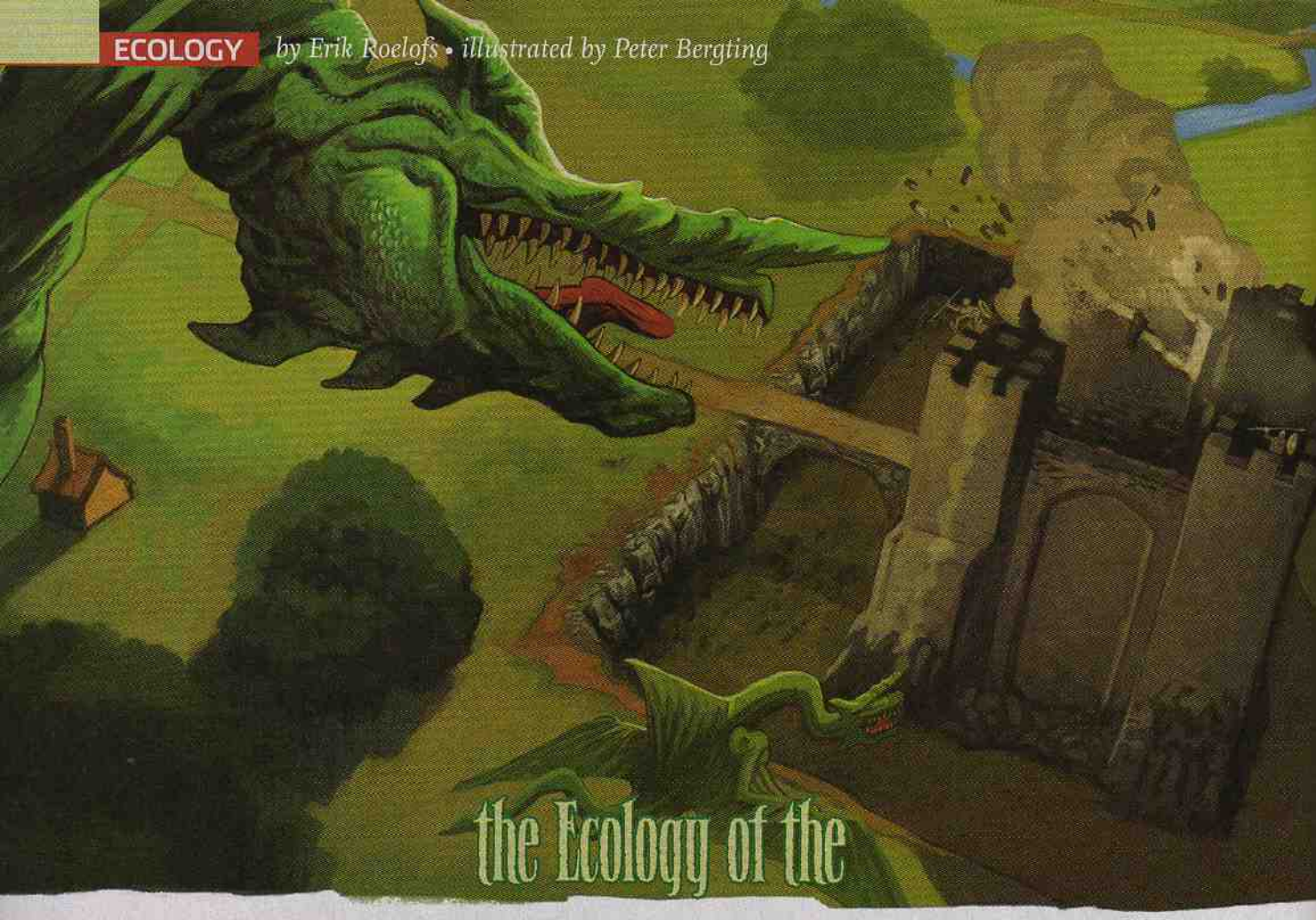
Wyrmen speak Ragamoll badly, but they know all the choice curse words.

Typical Physical Characteristics: Physically, wyrmen are red-skinned, four-limbed creatures with two wings and two feet. Their feet function as hands and they rarely walk anywhere. They stand about 3 feet tall at most and weigh no more than 60 pounds.

Alignment: Wyrmen care little for laws and are often quite insulting and crude. As a result most wyrmen are chaotic neutral.

Treasure: Wyrmen hoard anything they perceive to be of value, including coins, crude weapons, shiny bits of metal, as well as other generally worthless pieces of junk.

by Erik Roelofs • illustrated by Peter Bergting



the Ecology of the YRTHAK

Capable of detecting prey from miles away and crumbling whole castles with their blaring cries, yrthaks (YEER-thaks) are masters of the sky and sound. Known for their ability to focus noise into a terrible and unexpected weapon, these extraordinary beasts are feared as much for their alien appearances as for their unique powers. Yet, yrthaks are not merely mindless monsters or freakish interlopers upon the natural world. Rather, beyond such clouds of fear and misinformation soar magically gifted beasts as clever and intriguing as they are deadly.

HISTORY OF THE YRTHAK

The ancient myths passed down by the mystery cult of Nyx speak of Brannius of Apollo, a man who many considered the greatest and kindest bard of his age. Yet even with this fame and appeal, he knew that his uplifting music could not reach everyone. This tormented Brannius, who hoped to brighten the lives of all he could. Although he traveled far and sought magic to spread his song, he knew that even all the magic he could muster would never allow him to play for the entire world.

Desperate for a way to acquire the power to have his song reach around the world, he offered a week-long hymn of devotion to any deity who would listen, praying for a way to accomplish his dearest wish. As the final note faded, at the precise moment the sun vanished behind the horizon, two powerful entities answered Brannius's call.

A beautiful, winged trumpet archon wit her brilliant instrument held in hand arrived from the Seven Mounting Heavens of Celestia. Soothing the humble bard with

"In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king."
—Desiderius Erasmus, *Adages*

the promise that his legend would last forever, she told him that his beautiful songs would be played by great bards throughout the ages, and—some day far in the future—all the people of countless kingdoms would know his music. With that, she held out her radiant trumpet to Brannius.

At the same moment, a succubus arrived from the Infinite Layers of the Abyss. Holding a long, slender horn crafted from bone, the temptress promised Brannius the power to create music that would change the lives of all who heard it, songs no living thing could deny and that even the deaf would notice, and do so within his lifetime. After making her offer, she extended her terrible bone horn to the mortal.

Tormented by the choice, Brannius searched his heart, but his ego intervened. Finally, he reached for the fiend's gnarled horn. Before he could touch it, though, the succubus drew him close and, with a wicked grin, slammed the gnarled horn into the bard's forehead, splitting his skull. Yet, Brannius did not die. His flesh warping and bones shattering and realigning, the horn changed the very nature of his being. The archon averted her eyes as the screams of Brannius died away and the first yrthak was born.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE YRTHAK

The following table shows the results of a Knowledge (arcana) check as it relates to yrthaks. Mountain dwellers, fearful musicians, and researchers of strange anatomies are most likely to possess this information. The yrthak appears on page 262 of the *Monster Manual*.

Knowledge (arcana)

DC	Result
19	Yrthaks are dragonlike creatures capable of blasting prey with lances of destructive noise.
24	Yrthaks often target land near their prey with their sonic lance attack, creating explosions of debris. With their incredible senses of hearing, rhythmic noises attract yrthaks.
29	Despite their lack of eyes, yrthaks can detect creatures through their sense of hearing. Deafening yrthaks effectively blinds the creatures, and they prove vulnerable to all manner of other sonic attacks.
34	Yrthaks nest high in mountain crevasses, often near areas of soothing natural noise. Stories tell of yrthaks becoming enamored with musicians' music and kidnapping them.
39	Yrthak parents avoid using their sonic attacks when near their eggs. The echolocation of bats also seem to confuse their senses of hearing.

Physiology of the Yrthak

Yrthaks are like no other creatures in existence. Somewhat resembling flying crocodiles or sickly green dragons, adult yrthaks grow to approximately 14 feet long, with lengthy, leathery wings nearly 40 feet wide. A mouth disproportionate to the beasts' size splits the end of a long, muscular neck—the predominate characteristic of an almost featureless head crowned by a spiraling green horn. While the creature's body looks frail, even sickly with its jaundiced green skin, its tough hide and numerous cartilaginous barbs provide yrthaks with considerable defenses. Easily the creature's most distinctive trait and defense, however, is its twisting horn, the source of its well-known sonic abilities.

The process by which yrthaks create their devastating sonic blasts involves surprisingly little magical influence, relying more on a complex network of interior structures and unique organs. The weapon's use begins with the creature's detection of potential prey. Within a yrthak's mouth bobs a strange tongue. Marked by a bulbous swell called the aural lobe (1 on the anatomical diagram), this sensitive cluster of nerves detects sound as most creatures' tongues sense taste. Incredibly powerful, this organ can detect noises beyond most humanoids' abilities to notice, such as the beating of a creature's heart, the flow of air around nearby forms, or loud noises as far as 30 miles away. Using its strong support muscle, the lobe can lower into the apical depression (2), a protective divot at the front of the creature's mouth filled with thick, protective saliva. Copious amounts of this viscous gel seep into the hollow and spread throughout the creature's mouth from a large salivary gland (3). With the aural lobe lowered, a yrthak can drink, eat, or attack with its powerful jaws with little fear of harming the organ. During such acts and, in fact, whenever its mouth is closed, the creature is effectively blind.

Once a yrthak's tongue has detected a presence, the information is transferred to the creature's primary brain (4). This organ functions much like those of normal creatures, interpreting sensations and providing a yrthak with an intellect and cunning far greater than that of just an animal—an oft underestimated fact. Aside from the primary brain, though, yrthaks possess a secondary, or acoustic, brain (5). This organ possesses peerless capability to distinguish variations in sound and allows a yrthak to choose what to hear, filtering through countless background noises to listen to those it deems relevant or useful. The acoustic brain also controls the creation of the beast's sonic attacks and protects it from creating sounds damaging to itself.

The creation of a yrthak's sonic lance begins in the creature's lungs. Air is forced into the yrthak's head, much like the act of whistling, except that in these creatures, the air is forced into special sinuses by a unique group of organs called harmonic diaphragms (6). Within these resonating sinuses (7), a number of tones are created and echo back upon one another through fleshy tubes and connected echo chambers. The effect is like a number of whistles being simultaneously created and amplified over and over. The cacophony builds in volume until it is then echoed back into a chamber of the harmonic diaphragms. There, in an action not fully understood and likely without any natural explanation, the noise is violently forced into the yrthak's horn. The horn houses a cartilaginous structure referred to as a tonal multivibrator (8), a mostly hollow structure pocked with holes and tunnels seemingly at random, but which actually serve to focus the noise. Now directed, the noise escapes from the horn through the thin flesh, blasting forth in a line of discordant tones and vibrations. This entire process occurs in a matter of seconds.

Psychology and Society of the Yrthak

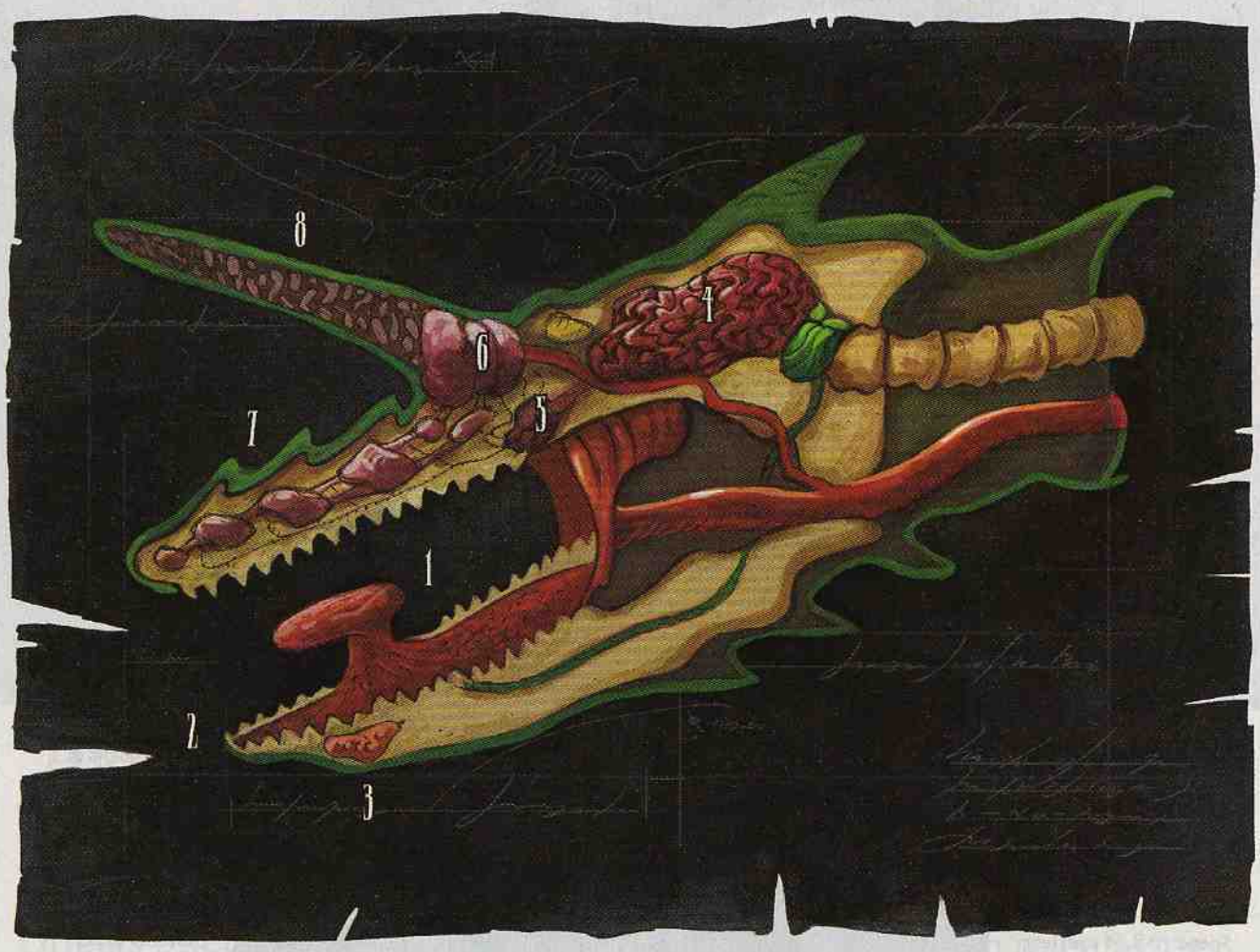
Yrthaks typically roost in areas that thrum with regular noise, such as near waterfalls, bubbling volcanoes, and seaside cliffs. With their incredible hearing, they sometimes dwell in areas humanoids don't consider noisy, such as amid the rustling sounds of the deep forest, upon high mountains where they can listen to brewing thunderheads, and—rarely but most dangerously—atop towering buildings amid bustling cities.

Concerned primarily with survival, yrthaks spend most of their time away from their lairs searching for food. Although omnivorous, they prefer eating meat over plants, but they are intelligent enough to refrain from attacking creatures obviously too powerful for them, such as rocs, stone giants, and red and silver dragons, which often frequent their preferred mountainous habitats. When they do roost, these lairs most often take the form of deep fissures in rocky cliffs, packed with leaves and wood sonically splintered to fine chips.

Incapable of humanoidlike speech, yrthaks possess a strange language of subtle rustles, flaps, clicks, and subharmonic tones. No humanoid can reproduce the Yrthak language, although some races of the deep Underdark—particularly destrachans and nycters—can hear and potentially learn it. Making use of a variety of faculties and being perceived by the keenly receptive hearing of other yrthaks, great amounts of information can be exchanged far more swiftly than through vocal speech, allowing cooperating yrthaks to have an almost instantaneous knowledge of their allies' movements and tactics.

Yrthaks appear to spend much of their time in solitude, but their incredible sense of hearing means that those occupying the same region as others are never far apart. Being able to communicate over vast distances, yrthaks can swiftly respond to one another's calls for aid. In fact, some researchers believe the creatures' sonic explosion ability serves double duty as both a devastating attack and an invigorating cry of warning and call for aid—much like the scream of most humanoids.

Yrthaks do come together, however, during their mating seasons, roughly once every three years and usually sometime during autumn. Attracting each other by creating pleasing sounds, couples return to the male's nest



or roost. Several weeks after a complicated and notably silent mating, the female lays one to four sizable eggs, each weighing around 25 pounds and being roughly 2 feet in diameter. The couple stays together until the eggs hatch, remaining relatively quiet for the entirety of the required 4 months so as not to damage the developing youngs' sensitive auditory system. Upon the whelps' hatching, the female chases off the male, retaining his territory and using it to rear their young, while the male goes in search of a new home.

While yrthaks typically avoid one another, they often exhibit a marked curiosity regarding other creatures, especially those capable of producing music. Where noise soothes yrthaks, music stimulates them. Wildly changing notes and tones excite their sensitive hearing, resonating through their bodies in a kind of tonal ecstasy. In the wild, the closest yrthaks come to music are the pulse of storms or rare natural disasters. Thus, the music of civilized areas and wandering musicians are quick to attract nearby yrthaks, even from miles away. While intelligent enough to fear the threats of humanoid cities, yrthaks have been known to follow and even abduct travelers who openly sing or play instruments, terrifying such wayfarers and sometimes whisking them away to treacherous lairs. There, the abductee might be able to survive for some time if it placates the beast with music. Some performers of particular talents find they have a skill for lulling yrthaks to sleep and have survived months, even years, living with their monstrous hosts, while others have made daring escapes by lulling their beastly captors to sleep.

Yrthaks are also capable of detecting the sound made by bats and other creatures with sonar or sound-based perception. They commonly blast entire swarms of bats with their sonic attacks, as the flying mammals interfere with the sounds the yrthak are listening to and possibly disrupt their "sight."

ADVANCED YRTHAK

Beneath the volcano-island of Anak Krakau slumbers a living disaster, a yrthak of incredible size, which likely came to rest on the isle centuries ago when the volcano still spewed strange smokes from the Underdark's deepest depths. None can say how long the creature has slept there, the sediment and jungle having gradually overgrown it. When humans came to Anak Krakau and discovered the buried creature, only its 30-foot-tall horn jutted from the earth—a strange humming green monolith. The tribe settled around it, revering the totem as a god, playing music for He-Who-Hums every day. In actuality, the yrthak dreams centuries-long dreams, oblivious to the earth and village that has

been built upon its body. Should the volcano ever erupt again, though, He-Who-Hums will doubtlessly wake, destroying the entire village and unleashing one of the most cacophonous catastrophes the world has ever known.

HE-WHO-HUMS **CR 24**

Male kaiju yrthak
CE Colossal magical beast
Monster Manual 262, DRAGON #289
Init +2; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14
Languages Yrthak

AC 36, touch 4, flat-footed 34
hp 754 hp (52 HD); Die Hard, fast healing 20 **DR** 25/magic
Immune gaze attacks, illusions, mind-affecting effects, all sight-based or visual effects
Resist electricity 50; **SR** 34
Fort +38 **Ref** +31, **Will** +18
Weakness vulnerable to sonic
Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); fly 60 ft. (poor)
Melee* bite +44 (3d8+30) and 2 claws +42 (2d6+22)
Ranged sonic lance +46 (6d6)
Space 40 ft; **Reach** 20 ft.
Base Atk +52; Grp +83
Atk Options Cleave, Fly-By Attack, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Snatch, swallow whole, trample (4d12+7)
Special Actions explosion, sonic lance, windstorm
Spell-like Abilities (CL 20th)
1/day—*control weather, whirlwind*
*15-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 40, Dex 14, Con 29, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 20
SQ absorb electricity, death throes, no breath
Feats Die Hard, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch
Skills Hide –1, Listen +14, Move Silently +15, Spot +14

Swallow Whole (Ex) He-Who-Hums can swallow Huge or smaller opponents by making a successful grapple check. Once swallowed, the opponent takes 2d8+15 points of crushing damage, plus 3d6 points of acid damage per round. A swallowed creature can cut its way out using claws or a light weapon by dealing 50 points of damage to He-Who-Hums's stomach (AC 20). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed creature must cut its own way out.

Trample (Ex) As a standard action while on the ground, He-Who-Hums can run over an opponent of Gargantuan or smaller size. He-Who-Hums merely has to move over the opponent and deals 4d12+7 points of damage. Trampled opponents can attempt attacks of opportunity, but these incur a –4 penalty. If they do not make attacks of opportunity, trampled opponents can make DC 51 Reflex saves for half damage.

Explosion (Su) A yrthak can fire its sonic lance at the ground, a large rock, a stone wall, or the like to create an explosion of shattered stone. This attack deals 2d6 points of piercing damage to all within 10 feet of the effect's center. This counts as a use of the sonic lance attack and thus is usable only once every 2 rounds, and never on the round following a sonic lance attack.

Sonic Lance (Su) Once every 2 rounds, a yrthak can focus sonic energy in a ray up to 60 feet long. This is a ranged touch attack that deals 6d6 points of damage to a single target.

Windstorm (Ex) As a standard action, He-Who-Hums can blast an area with powerful gusts of wings by flapping its wings. The blast of wind creates a 100-foot-long cone of hurricane force wind (see page 95 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Absorb Electricity (Ex) He-Who-Hums can absorb electricity damage. Electricity damage that bypasses He-Who-Hums's energy resistance is absorbed and converted into temporary hit points that last for 10 minutes.

Death Throes (Su) If killed, He-Who-Hums explodes, dealing 20d6 points of electricity damage to everything within 100 feet. DC 45 Reflex save for half.

No Breath (Ex) He-Who-Hums does not breathe and is immune to gas-based attacks that require Fortitude saving throws. It can also exist buried in the earth, underwater, or in airless environments with ease.

Braving the Isle of Dread

by Nicolas Logue • illustrated by Ben Wootten

The Isle of Dread is not idly named, and its formidable shores are no place for fools. To endure its fearsome predators, cryptic natives, and the vicious pirates who prey upon those who settle its coast, this article series presents you, the player, with the tips, tricks, and tools you need to avoid being swept away. While the pages of *Dungeon* present DMs with the isle's monstrous denizens and the dangerous plots of the Savage Tide Adventure Path's myriad villains, *Dragon* offers details and options to give you the edge you need to survive. This month's installment details the Olman natives of the isle, ideas for replacement PCs, and a look into the defenses (or lack thereof) of Farshore.

ADVENTURE TIE

This installment of Savage Tidings links to the fifth episode of the Savage Tide Adventure Path, "Tides of Dread," presented in *Dungeon* #143.

The Olman

The Olman are a remarkable people whose traditions remain unsullied by the rising forces of commerce, industry, and corruption.

The human tribes of the Olman existed on the Isle of Dread as far back as their stories stretch. Descended from the once-great Olman theocrats of the sprawling city-state of Thanaclan, their capital city is now nothing more than

a mist-shrouded ruin filled with horrors that have driven mad the stoutest men. Their "deities" of old are now worshiped as powerful totems, granting these dark-skinned natives power over life and death. Seven tribes live southeast of the Great Wall on the Isle of Dread: Burowao, Dawa, Kirikuka, Mora, Panitube, Tanaroans, and Usi. Other Olman exist beyond the wall, but no peaceful contact has been recorded with these cannibalistic savages whose war drums herald only slaughter and madness.

The reception strangers receive at Olman villages varies, but awareness of each tribe's culture increases the chances of avoiding violence and gaining the favor of the elders. While all Olman share many cultural proclivities, each tribe has its own distinct culture as well.

Burowao: The finest fishers and aquatic hunters of the islanders, the bold young warriors of the Burowao prove themselves by braving the terrors of Widow's Reef far from their cliff-top villages. Burowao sail war canoes and glide atop the waves on polished boards made from koa, a type of tree considered sacred and only found on the isle. Damaging koa groves is blasphemous and highly insulting to the Burowao. On the other hand, presenting the village with evidence of a great victory over a fearsome aquatic predator, such as a masher or elasmosaurus, goes a long way to winning the favor of the tribe, as does surfing the waves as the young Burowao do, or otherwise displaying magical power over water. The Burowao were the first Olman to craft and use shimalo'koa (see Olman Weapons and Items), and displaying proficiency in its use gains their respect.

Dawa: Nestled in their ancestral cove, the Dawa are frequently targeted by pirates, foreign powers, and agents of the Scarlet Brotherhood, all seeking the perfect location for a secret headquarters in the southwest peninsula of the Isle of Dread. While all Olman are stealthy, the Dawa specialize in it and maintain their control of their cove through guerilla tactics and shadow warfare. Constant attacks by foreign powers make the Dawa extremely paranoid, and they attack obviously well-armed parties on sight. A group that approaches with no arms or armor on display finds the tribe peaceful enough. The Dawa are proud of their skill at stealth. If their sentries are spotted, the Dawa grow disgruntled. Pretending not to notice the sentries or approaching war party pleases the Dawa chieftain greatly.

Kirikuka: Most of the Kirikuka's totems consist of aerial creatures. Their village is dotted with idols carved in the shape of couatls, dragons, great avians, and pterodactyls. Anyone who can fly or who rides a flying mount greatly impresses the chieftain of the Kirikuka. In addition, the Kirikuka invented the japute, so becoming proficient in its use wins their favor.

Mora: The stoic but generous people of Mora frequently offer shelter and asylum to visitors. Moran fighting traditions are central to their culture and they respect martial power above all else. A party unafraid to display its skill at warfare earns the respect of this tribe.

Approaching meekly or begging for aid provokes the Morans' disgust. They still offer food or shelter, but they refuse to ally themselves or lend their warriors to the cause of a party appearing weak. If a group provokes a nonlethal fight with Mora warriors and wins, the villagers treat the group members with respect and comradeship thereafter. Mora zombie-masters are some of the most powerful among the Olman. Destroying their undead tribesmen greatly angers the Morans. In addition, the Morans are credited with creating the first form of unarmed Kahiko. Displaying great skill at unarmed fighting or learning Kahiko greatly impresses them.

Panitube: The Panitube are interested in foreign trade above all else. The arrival of such comforts and commodities has already deeply undermined their warrior culture. The Panitube happily trade with foreigners, offering pearls and coral in exchange for accoutrements of civilization from far across the sea. They rarely lend military aid to anyone and prefer to remain aloof of foreigners' troubles.

Tanaroans: Power is passed down along matriarchal bloodlines in Tanaroa. They respect strong women and scoff at any group led by a man (or worse, composed entirely of men). By far the fiercest warriors of the Olman, the Tanaroans make formidable allies. They have their own troubles, however, as their proximity to the Great Wall and the terrors beyond it does not allow them to spare warriors to aid in colonial defense. The Tanaroans can offer supplies, weapons, and advice on strategy, but not military aid. The first Olman to craft and use kaua'koi, the Tanaroans greatly respect anyone displaying proficiency with this extremely difficult weapon.

Olman Weapons

Olman warriors and zombie masters make use of numerous indigenous weapons in their day-to-day survival on the treacherous Isle of Dread. Parties seeking to brave the dangers of the isle might do well to master the Olman's arsenal.

Japute: The talon of a pterodactyl, deinonychus, or other powerful predator is mounted onto a wooden handle with several leather straps attached. The japute is then wound onto the wielder's wrist and forearm with the strips of leather. Properly equipping or removing a japute requires a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

While wielding a japute, you gain a +6 bonus on any roll made to keep from being disarmed in combat and a +2 bonus on Climb checks.

Exotic Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Light Melee Weapons							
Japute	20 gp	1d3	1d4	19–20/x2	—	2 lb.	Slashing
Shimalo'koa	10 gp	1d6	1d8	×2	—	3 lb.	Slashing
Two-Handed Melee Weapon							
Kaua'koi	5 gp	1d4/1d4	1d6/1d6	×2	—	5 lb.	Bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing

Kaua'koi: This vicious scrimshaw weapon is fashioned from large lengths of bone harvested from Huge creatures. Several hand-notches are carved all over the bone, while the rest is sculpted into spurs, blades, and polished nodules. Fighting with a kaua'koi is a high art, involving constantly switching grips to make the most of this versatile weapon. In many tribes, carving one's own kaua'koi is a right of passage marking a young Olman's mastery of war arts.

A kaua'koi is a double weapon. You can fight with it as if fighting with two weapons, but if you do, you incur all the normal attack penalties associated with fighting with two weapons, just as if you were using a one-handed weapon and a light weapon (see Two-Weapon Fighting, on page 160 of the *Player's Handbook*). A creature wielding a kaua'koi in one hand can't use it as a double weapon—only one end of the weapon can be used in any given round.

If proficient with a kaua'koi, you may choose the type of damage you deal with each attack.

Shimalo'koa: This hard piece of koa wood studded with rows of razor sharp shark's teeth tears opponents to shreds. Koa is remarkably light, yet stronger than most other woods.

New Feats

The following feats are available to those who experienced the terrors of the Isle of Dread and lived to tell about it.

Friend to the Tribe

You have earned the respect and comradeship of the native Olman of the Isle of Dread and are henceforth treated as one of their tribe.

Prerequisites: Any non-Olman, you must have performed a great service for one of the seven tribes of the Olman and earned their trust and friendship.

Benefit: For all effects related to origin, you are considered an Olman. For example, you qualify for feats requiring you to be Olman and you may join the Olman affiliation. You gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy and Gather Information checks made related to the Olman. With a successful DC 25 Diplomacy check, you may requisition a spell cast by an Olman spellcaster. You may request this spell once per week and it is always cast by a spellcaster of the lowest level able to cast the spell. This free spell can have an expensive material component up to 100 gp × your character level or a focus worth up to double that. The spell's level can be no higher than 1/4 your character level. Thus, a 12th-level character can request of the Olman a 3rd-level spell.

Kahiko

You have mastered the Olman martial art called Kahiko.

Prerequisites: Olman, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, flurry of blows class feature, proficient with an Olman exotic weapon.

Benefit: You gain a +1 on all disarm, grapple, and trip attempts when wielding an Olman exotic weapon. In addition, you can treat any Olman exotic weapon in which you are proficient as a special monk weapon, allowing you to perform a flurry of blows with it.

Kahiko Master

You excel at Olman fighting arts.

Prerequisites: Olman, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Kahiko, flurry of blows class feature, proficient with an Olman exotic weapon.

Benefit: You gain a +2 on all disarm, grapple, and trip attempts when wielding an Olman exotic weapon. This bonus overlaps (does not stack with) the bonus gained from the Kahiko feat. In addition, you may attempt to stun a foe with the Stunning Fist feat (if you have it) when wielding an Olman exotic weapon as if you were making an unarmed strike. Finally, you may throw a shimalo'koa with a 10-foot range increment.

Tribal Trait

Choose an Olman tribe. You are the pride of the tribe and a living testament to its cultural distinctiveness.

Prerequisite: Olman.

Benefit: The benefit you gain depends on which of the seven tribes to which you belong.

Burowao: You gain a +2 bonus on Swim checks and take only half the normal penalties for fighting underwater. You can also ignore

concealment granted to underwater enemies when you are on the surface or out of the water.

Dawa: You gain a +1 bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks. If an opponent is flat-footed to you during a surprise round of combat and you successfully use sneak attack against him, your sneak attack deals an extra +1d6 points of damage. You must possess the sneak attack class ability in order to gain the bonus for it.

Kirikuka: You gain a +2 bonus on Climb checks. The range increment of any thrown weapon you use increases by 10 feet.

Mora: You gain a +1 bonus on Tumble checks. In addition, you gain the following spell-like ability as a 1st-level caster: 3/day—*hide from undead.*

Panitube: You gain +2 bonus on Will saves made to resist illusion spells and effects. In addition, you also gain a +2 bonus on Appraise checks and Knowledge (arcana) checks made to identify or price any natural treasures of the Isle of Dread, such as rare corals, dinosaur teeth, or exotic gemstones.

Tanaroans: You gain a +1 bonus on Survival checks and, if female, a +2 bonus on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks made against male Olman.

In addition, when wielding a kaua'koi you can have it deal two kinds of damage.

Usi: You gain a +2 bonus on Knowledge (religion) checks and initiative rolls.

New Affilation: Olman Tribes

Symbol: The blood-spattered talon of a large dinosaur.

Background, Goals, and Dreams: The Olman tribes are beset from within and without by grave dangers. They have contended with the fierce denizens of the Isle of Dread for ages, but now they also face increasing assaults on their safety and cultural integrity from foreigners. The Olman place the survival of their people and culture as their top priority in the face of outside aggression, strange increased volcanic activity on the isle, and the resurgence of several of the island's most lethal inhabitants. Beyond survival, the Olman seek to preserve their cultural traditions against the corruption of visiting peoples. They exist in a precarious balance and must choose their level of involvement with the foreigners wisely. Many Olman favor isolationism and ignore most foreigners, while others believe the only way to weather the coming conflicts is through careful alliances. Some Olman hold dearly to the belief of restoring their civilization to its former glory.

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Enemies and Allies: The tribes do not oppose all foreigners, only those who seek to abuse their hospitality and destroy their way of life. They happily ally themselves with anyone who seeks to defeat the dark forces growing in power beyond the Great Wall and beneath the earth. Some among the tribes are quick to embrace the Scarlet Brotherhood or trade with colonists or other visitors. Most Olman know the symbol of the Seekers and are wary of any who bear it, as that organization's past attempts to plunder and exploit their treasures and cultural secrets are not fondly remembered.

Members: Only Olman can be affiliated with the tribes. A non-Olman who impresses the elders might eventually qualify for the Friend to the Tribe feat and this affiliation.

Type: Tribe (racial)

Scale: 7 (peninsula)

Affiliation Score Criteria: Native Olman are automatically affiliated. A non-Olman must be inducted into a tribe in front of a council of elders and take part in a one week ritual of fasting and imbibing an intoxicating herbal mixture called dramkara in hopes of experiencing visions of the tribe's totem. After this week-long ordeal, the non-Olman is considered Olman in every way by the rest of the tribe.

Criterion	Affiliation Score Modifier
Character Level	+1/2 PC's level
5 or more ranks in Knowledge (nature)	+1
5 or more ranks in Survival	+1
Favored enemy (aberration, animal or magical beast)	+1
Dinosaur animal companion or mount	+1
Dream Seer feat	+1
Kahiko feat	+1
Kahiko Master feat	+2
Carve own kaua'koi	+1
Slay noted enemy of the Olman	+1/8 enemy's CR
Assist Olman in repelling or defeating threat	+2
Responsible for the destruction of zombie retinue	–2
Responsible for the death of Olman war party	–4
Ignore threat to Olman	–4
Refuse the command of a tribal elder	–4
Wear medium or heavy armor	–1
Use weapons made of metal	–1

Affiliation Score	Title: Benefits and Duties
3 or lower	Junior member of the tribe with no benefits.
4–10	**Tribal Warrior:** +2 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks, proficient with one Olman exotic weapon.
11–19	**Hunt Master:** You may request a cleric or druid spell of up to 2nd level once per week. Once per month, you must lead a war party against the tribe's enemies or take a –2 penalty on your affiliation score. A war party consists of ten human (Olman) fighter 3.
20–25	**War Chief:** +4 bonus on Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Intimidate checks made in Olman villages. In addition, you may request the service of a zombie retinue whose total Hit Dice equals your character level.
26–29	**Elder:** Any Olman gladly gives his life at your command (although penalties may apply to your affiliation score as normal). Once per month, you can select another member of your tribe whose affiliation score is less than your own and honor his service to the tribe. That tribesman gains a +2 bonus to his affiliation score. A tribesman may only gain this bonus once. In addition, you may pray to the totem of your tribe to receive a boon one per week. This involves a ritual that lasts for 6 hours, in which you burn an offering of 100 gp × your character level or offer a blood sacrifice of a living creature whose Hit Dice equals at least half your own. At the conclusion of the ritual you gain the spell-like ability to cast any spell on the cleric or druid spell list as a cleric or druid two levels lower than your character level. You may use this spell-like ability once. You may only have one spell available to you in this manner at a time.
30 or higher	**Chosen One:** The tribe believes you are destined to herald a new era of glory and revitalize the long-dead Olman Empire. You no longer suffer affiliation score penalties for the death of war parties, the destruction of zombie retinues, or ignoring the commands of a tribal elder. Your zombie retinue's total Hit Dice may equal twice your character level. You may also cast *dominate animal* as a spell-like ability at will (caster level equals your character level).

Executive Powers: Craft, Plague, and War.

Replacement PCs

Death waits right around the corner for anyone assuming the perilous mantle of adventurer. Sometimes new PCs may take the reins of martyrs slain nobly in their quest. Fortunately, the Isle of Dread's numerous Olman villages, pirate strongholds, and colonial outposts have their fair share of heroes and scallywags bred for adventure by the many dangers of the environs.

Colonists: The colony's inhabitants are a mixed bag of researchers, treasure hunters, smugglers, missionaries, sellswords, and eccentrics drawn to the Isle of Dread for many purposes. Every class might find representation in Farshore, making this a great source for new PCs.

Pirates: The Crimson Fleet isn't the easiest place to get ahead. A member of the fleet might desert and escape to warn Farshore, and might even aid in its defense. Perhaps the PC's motivations are less altruistic. After being passed over for advancement or suffering mistreatment, the character might be out for vengeance.

Affiliation Updates

The affiliations PCs might have joined in Sasserine remain relevant even as far away as Farshore. Presented here are Isle of Dread-specific updates to the seven affiliations presented in *Dragon* #348 that should help PC members stay connected.

Church of the Whirling Fury: Vesserin Catherly, Farshore's sole cleric and the local representative of the Whirling Fury, wishes to verify the truth in rumors of demonic influence among the islands around Farshore. He seeks out any newly arrived member of the church and presses such a character to look for evidence of fiends among the islands as well as any trace of Noltus Innersol, a missionary of Pelor lost somewhere on the Isle of Dread.

Spending two weeks searching for Noltus Innersol on the Isle of Dread proper earns you a +1 affiliation score bonus with the Church of the Whirling Fury.

Dawn Council: Mostly interested in establishing a profitable colony on the jungle-covered island of Temute,

the Dawn Council has two members in Farshore: Lavinia Vanderboren and Lord Manthalay Meravanchi. Both Lavinia and Lord Manthalay wish to develop Farshore, but they have vastly different ideas of how to do it.

Increasing Farshore's assets and finding other ways of improving its profitability earns you a +1 affiliation score bonus with the Dawn Council.

Emerald Crest: With no known representative in or near Farshore, the Emerald Crest still has an eye on the colony. Safe ports of call always interest the organization, so members should do their best to strengthen Farshore's defenses and seek to clear away living obstacles.

Establishing a trade route between Sasserine and Farshore earns you a +2 affiliation score bonus with the Emerald Crest.

The Scarlet Brotherhood: Hushed rumors hint at a Scarlet Brotherhood encampment on one of the islands near Farshore. Members of the Scarlet Brotherhood in the party should feel compelled to seek out this encampment to offer aid.

Finding the rumored Scarlet Brotherhood encampment and providing help earns you a +1 affiliation score bonus with the Scarlet Brotherhood.

The Seekers: Jeran Emrikad serves as Farshore's keeper of records, librarian, sage, and contact for the Seekers. Jeran considers himself a stay-at-home explorer, so the rumors he has heard about an eighth tribe of Olman on Farshore's island of Temute have him all atwitter. If truly adventurous Seeker members arrive in Farshore, Jeran wastes no time in sending them out to find the lost village.

Uncovering the village of the eighth tribe earns you a +1 affiliation score bonus with the Seekers.

Witchwardens: Farshore's Witchwarden contact, Hevrick Aldwattle, has spent the last few years cataloging and researching the natural resources of the island, and for his troubles he has quite an impressive alchemy lab to show. He has heard tales of an ancient Thanaclan magic on the Isle of Dread itself, and he charges any other member of the order heading into the isle's interior to uncover it.

Securing lost magics from Thanaclan earns you a +1 affiliation score bonus with the Witchwardens.

Zelkarune's Horns: When not doing his level best to keep Farshore safe, militia leader and Zelkarune's Horns member Ulvar Kabbanja has kept his eyes and ears open for wonderfully powerful creatures to capture or kill. He has, over time, compiled a list of the seven most infamous and wily denizens of the region (see The Infamous Seven sidebar). Ulvar charges any members of Zelkarune's Horns to bringing the heads of these beasts to him.

Bringing any three of the heads of the infamous seven creatures back to Farshore earns you a +1 affiliation score bonus with Zelkarune's Horns. You may earn this bonus twice.

What You Know: Farshore

After settling in and recovering from her long voyage to Farshore, Lavinia Vanderboren's first task was to tour the colony and take stock of places where the colony could use some improvement. She happily shares her observations with the PCs and welcomes any aid they might provide.

Defensive Improvements

Farshore needs certain improvements in defending itself from enemies.

Chapel: Vesserin's a bit overwhelmed; he can certainly use priestly aid at the Farshore Chapel.

Harbor: The harbor's approach could use some more defenses, perhaps some submerged traps to slow the advance of enemy ships?

Infirmary: An experienced healer could probably increase the infirmary's efficiency with a week of work.

Palisade: The wall surrounding Farshore could certainly be improved by a skilled engineer.

Watchtowers: The colony could use two more watchtowers—one to watch to the northeast and one to watch the harbor.

Efficiency Improvements

Places where the colony could improve its value as a trading post.

Aldwattle's Lab: Aldwattle could use some help with his organizational skills—someone who knows magic and can craft items could teach him a lot.

Cemetery: If someone could cast a *hallow* spell over the Farshore cemetery, local worries about undead could be defused.

Clayworks: An experienced potter could certainly help get the Clayworks working more efficiently.

Farms: An experienced farmer could do wonders in improving how the colony's farms function.

Mines: The mines south of Farshore could do with some oversight by an experienced miner.

THE INFAMOUS SEVEN

Bringing the heads of these powerful creatures to Farshore secures great honor and respect from the nearby Olman. Killing more than one of these powerful beasts secures your legend.

Baaragrauth: A particularly cantankerous dragon eel (*Monster Manual III*, 44), Baaragrauth is said to haunt various reefs and bays near the Seven Villages, although to date, no one's managed to locate his lair.

Burbalarg: An immense shambling mound larger than many buildings reportedly dwells in Blackfen Swamp on the western coast of the isle. A tribe of bullywugs calls this monster Burbalarg, and have taken it as their tribe's totem although it is unlikely that the frog-men have anything resembling an actual alliance with the monster.

Cerattakatha: A terrifying scorpion the size of a house, Cerattakatha dwells on the aptly named Scorpion Isle. The remote location of the isle and its unsavory scorpion denizens make the prospect of even reaching Cerattakatha's lair difficult.

Chakaranka: A notorious bull ankylosaurus (see *DUNGEON* #143), more dangerous than most of his kind, has long dwelt in the Valley of Madness, where he grazes upon a local narcotic that does little to blunt his ill-natured personality.

Emraag: An immense dragon turtle who dwells in the northern waters, Emraag is known by the local tribes as the Glutton. He serves as the principle reason why more waterborne traffic doesn't surround the isle.

Temauhti-tecuani: An enormous tyrannosaur, scarred and missing one hand and one eye, Temauhti-tecuani has long been viewed as the oldest and angriest of his kind on the isle.

Xiureksor: The lord of Dragonhaunt Hollow, Xiureksor is an enormous green dragon, supposedly the only true dragon to live on the Isle of Dread. No one's seen her in some time, but it's generally assumed she still lives, sleeping in a hidden cave below the northeastern section of the isle.

Sellis' Woodworks and Smithy: Anyone who knows something about armorsmithing, weaponsmithing, or carpentry should go talk to Dranys Sellis about his methods. He's a bit of a know-it-all, but he could certainly use some advice.

Trade Routes: Someone needs to organize a return to Sasserine as soon as possible. Load a convoy of cargo ships up with trade goods, sail them back to Sasserine, share sea charts, then return to Farshore with supplies and more merchants. It's a six-month proposition, but an important one. Lavinia doesn't want to leave Farshore so soon, but perhaps someone the PCs know would make a good captain.

Hazardous Work

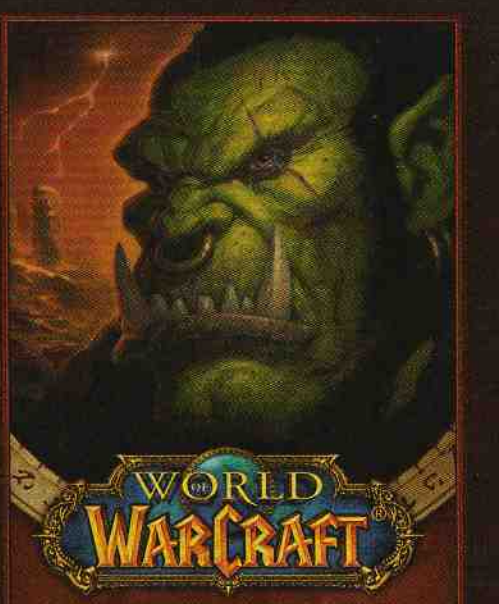
More dangerous missions best suited for adventurers.

Lost Village: Jeran Emrikad wants to hire some adventurers to look for a lost village in the wilds of Temute.

Tannery: The hides of many of the Isle of Dread's monsters could make valuable additions to the work here.

Troglodytes: A band of troglodytes has been causing trouble; they live in a swamp near the center of Temute. If they can be dealt with, the colonists will be able to reach some prime lumber and exotic fruits.

Warehouses: Someone's been stealing from the warehouses—the thefts need to be stopped soon!



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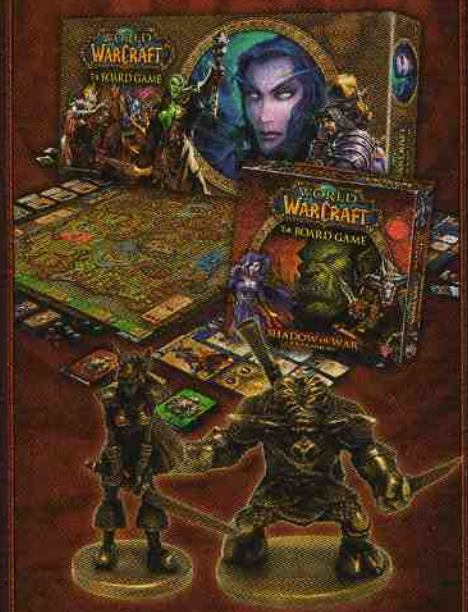

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FORGOTTEN REALMS

VOLO'S GUIDE

to the Forgotten Dead

Volo again, gentles. Every tavern has its chilling tales of hauntings and dead that walk to wreak revenge or devour the living.

I once thought minstrels desperate for meals and warm fireside beds had spent years outdoing each other with tongue-waggings about burning skulls that fly, faceless and boneless things that clutch and smother, and so on and on. I could scarce believe even drunken bards could invent so much lurid nonsense.

Until I traveled the wide Realms, and saw as wild a variety of undead and more. Faerûn is crawling with magic; I can only conclude those energies have made so many different undead that new menaces are being discovered even now.

Volo

(Volothamp Geddarm)

by Brian Cortijo, with special introduction by Ed Greenwood • illustrated by John Gravato

In the FORGOTTEN REALMS, the dead do not rest easy. With great magics and fell deeds inspiring the realm of the living, it's no wonder that the departed are often called back to Toril—either by the will of those still breathing or by their own needs to influence the mortal world. Yet, while many of these spirits seek to aid the living or bear warnings from lands beyond, many more rise as a result of dark magic, painful memories, and out of a need for justice. Thus, across the lands, blessed are the tombs that stand quiet and the gravekeepers whose watches are dull.

Presented here are three undead monstrosities native to the FORGOTTEN REALMS. The inquisitor and skuz first appeared in the second-edition bestiary, *MC11: Monstrous Compendium FORGOTTEN REALMS Appendix,* while the charnel custodian is a newly risen terror.

CHARNEL CUSTODIAN

The very graveyard seems to come alive around you. Earth shifts, rising into a horror composed of soil, gravestones, and the bodies of the dead. Reaching out a hand of bone and splintered coffin-wood, dozens of skulls open across the creature's form, mouthing silent screams.

CHARNEL CUSTODIAN **CR 11**

Always NE Huge undead

Init +1; **Senses** tremorsense 30 ft., Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages none

AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 24
(–2 size, +1 Dex, +16 natural)

hp 143 (22 HD); morbid rejuvenation

Immune undead immunities

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +16

Spd 40 ft. (8 squares); gravebound

Melee 2 slams +17 (2d6+8) and
3 bites +12 (1d8+4)

Ranged monument +10 (2d8)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +11; **Grp** +27

Atk Options bury, hurl monument

Abilities Str 26, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 16, Cha 14

SQ gravebound, morbid rejuvenation, +2 turn resistance,

undead traits

Environment any
Organization solitary
Treasure none
Advancement 23–34 (Huge), 35–46 (Gargantuan)

Bury (Su) When a charnel custodian begins its turn with a grappled opponent pinned, it can drag that creature into its body with a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d8+12 points of bludgeoning damage per round from the grinding stone and bones within. A buried creature can dig its way out by winning an opposed grapple check against the charnel custodian, which the undead creature makes as a free action. Once the creature frees itself, earth and debris clog the hole; another buried creature must fight its own way out. Creatures killed by this ability cannot be *raised*, *resurrected*, or *reincarnated* by any means until the horror is permanently destroyed.

A Huge charnel custodian can bury up to 2 Large, 4 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, 128 Diminutive, or 512 Fine or smaller opponents in this way at one time.

Hurl Monument (Ex) As a standard action, a charnel custodian can pluck a mass of sculpted rock from its body and throw it as a ranged attack.

Gravebound A charnel custodian is permanently bound to the location where it was formed. The custodian cannot move more than 100 feet beyond the borders of the cemetery, battlefield, or similar spawning place. As a full-round action, a charnel custodian can discorporate, merging with the earth of its domain. The creature cannot be harmed in any way while it is discorporate and it may reform anywhere within the location it is bound to as another full-round action.

Morbid Rejuvenation (Su) A charnel custodian reduced to 0 hp recedes into the ground but is not permanently destroyed. 24 hours following its destruction, a charnel custodian rises again within the area it is bound to, restored to full hit points. This rejuvenation can only be prevented by destroying the horror then casting a *hallow* spell on the site or by setting right the offense that raised the creature.

Formed from materials drawn from crowded cemeteries, charnel custodians are masses of bone, earth, coffin-shards, and sepulchral monuments. Beings of unmitigated rage, these spontaneously forming terrors are forever bound to the boneyards that spawn them.

Charnel custodians form at locales where some great injustice has been committed upon the dead interred there. In some cases, those buried have not been granted proper funereal rites, or were laid in unconsecrated ground. In others, new constructions have been built upon old graves or an undeserving body—such as that of a tyrant, criminal, or foul priest—is buried among those deserving of a more peaceful afterlife.

A charnel custodian has no will or consciousness of its own, it knows only that it has been wronged, and seeks to avenge the residents of its graveyard. Only through the destruction of its physical form and the proper consecration of its grounds can the abomination's unquiet spirits be put to rest.

Charnel custodians are rare in the Forgotten Realms, but they occasionally rise at the sites of battles where the fallen dead are left unburied and in towns and villages wiped out by swift-moving plagues. Once discovered, a charnel custodian usually persists for a season or two, until local priests or passing adventurers can determine the cause of the disturbance and lay the creature to rest.

Several recent deaths in the City of the Dead in Waterdeep have recently been blamed on one of these undead, while one of the oldest and largest known charnel custodians, a mound the size of a small hill, still stalks the lands around the Battle of Bones.

inquisitor

A gaunt, zombielike creature emerges before you, its teeth clearly visible between the stretched lines of its lipless mouth. Wicked hooks, rusted chains, and a shuddersome array of torture implements abuse the thing's few withered strips of remaining flesh. One clawed hand eagerly grips the coils of a well-used whip.

INQUISITOR **CR 3**

Always LE Medium undead

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Common, varies (any additional 2 appropriate to the region)

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +6 natural)

hp 26 (4 HD)

Immune undead immunities

Fort +1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee 2 claws +3 (1d6+2 plus disease) or **Melee** mwk whip +6 (1d3 non-lethal/20)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Special Actions fear gaze

Abilities Str 13, Dex 14, Con —, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 16

SQ torture, undead traits

Feats Persuasive, Weapon Focus (whip)

Skills Bluff +12, Escape Artist +5, Intimidate +14, Listen +8, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Use Rope +4

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure double standard

Advancement 5–12 (Medium)

Disease (Ex) A target that takes damage from the inquisitor's claw attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or become infected with a disease known as wasting inquisition (incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1 Str and 1 Con). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Fear Gaze (Su) Viewing an inquisitor's face inspires terror. Creatures that meet the inquisitor's gaze must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or suffer the effects of a *fear* spell as cast by a 6th-level caster. The DC is Charisma-based.

Torture (Ex) As a full-round action, an inquisitor can deal 1 point of Charisma damage to a helpless victim. When employing the Intimidate skill during torture, the inquisitor gains a +4 bonus on its skill checks. (For complete rules on torture, see page 37 of the *Book of Vile Darkness.*)

The cruel, ancient undead known as inquisitors exist solely to torture victims and extract information. Created hundreds—even thousands—of years ago by magical rituals and torturous sacrifices, an inquisitor has no memory of its mortal life. All it knows is inflicting pain and the twisted joy of the suffering of living creatures.

In combat, inquisitors fight to incapacitate rather than to kill. Although these creatures have no compunction against slaying foes, an inquisitor is far more satisfied when it has at least one victim to torture following a battle. It is not unknown for an adventurer to awaken, bound fast, in an inquisitor's lair following what she thought was certain death.

An inquisitor's lair is typically dark and filled with all manner of instruments of torture, blood-spattered tables, and the occasional preserved trophies of past victims.

Inquisitors often serve liches and other beings who want to gather information without going through the messy trouble of evisceration, torture, or interrogation themselves. Unless commanded by a powerful spellcaster or undead, inquisitors prefer to lair in or near urban centers, where they can have ready access to victims.

An inquisitor can be created by a cleric of 14th level or higher with the *create undead* spell.

In the FORGOTTEN REALMS, inquisitors are most common in Thay and Sembia, although a few have been found in the North, near the fallen cities of Eaerlann and ancient Illefarn.

SKUZ

A vaguely humanoid shape of noxious green rises up from the water before you, seeming to pull the algae and slime from the surface to constitute its form. As the head forms, it turns toward you, the jellified jaws opening to spill forth a false tongue of ooze and putrid flesh.

SKUZ **CR 9**

Always CE Large undead

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., fluidsense 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14

Languages Common (understand only)

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (–1 size, +4 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 71 (11 HD); **DR** 10/bludgeoning

Immune grapple, trip, undead immunities

Weakness *control water*
Fort +3, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

Spd 10 ft. (2 squares), swim 40 ft.
Melee 2 slams +7 (1d6+3)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +12
Attack Options drowning grapple
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th)
3/day—*animate dead, create water, control water, major image* (DC 15), *suggestion* (DC 15)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 19, Con —, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 14
SQ create skuz, fluid form, undead traits
Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy
Skills Climb +16, Hide +15 (+23 in water), Listen +14, Move Silently +19, Spot +14, Swim +32

Environment any
Organization solitary
Treasure none
Advancement 12–20 (Large), 21–33 (Huge)

Fluidsense (Ex): A skuz can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the same body of water as itself.

Spell Vulnerability (Ex) A skuz is susceptible to the lower water effect of the *control water* spell, which halves the creature's current hit points with no saving throw allowed.

Drowning Grapple (Ex): Any creature grappled by a skuz is considered to be underwater. For as long as a creature is grappled, it must hold its breath or risk drowning. Holding one's breath within a skuz is more difficult than usual, as the fluid undead attempts to invade any being it grapples. As such, a grappled creature can only hold its breath for a number of rounds equal to one-quarter of its Constitution and the DCs of Constitution checks made to resist drowning increase by +2 every round. See page 304 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for rules on drowning.

Create Skuz (Su): Any humanoid killed by a skuz's energy drain swiftly decays and rises in 1d4 days as a skuz. Skuz formed in this way are not bound to the skuz that created them. They do not possess any of the memories or abilities they had in life.

Fluid Form (Ex) A skuz cannot be grappled or tripped, although it can initiate both types of attacks. A creature can only grapple a skuz to oppose a grapple the undead initiates. Trip attempts against a skuz have no effect.

Skills A skuz has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check made to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. In addition, a skuz has a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks; this bonus increases to +12 when the skuz is in water.

Formed from bodies left to putrefy within muddy graves and stagnant waters, skuz number among the most disgusting of all undead. Consisting of equal parts stagnant water, rotted vegetation, and liquefied corpse, skuz are consumed by a blind need for vengeance, seeking to inflict their horrible demise upon all living creatures. Making their home amid swamps, sewers, and stagnant areas of ponds and rivers, they await live prey to drag into their revolting pools. Preferring solitary existences, multiple skuz rarely linger together, with newly created spawn oozing away to pollute their own territories.

In the Forgotten Realms, skuz are most common in the Swamp of Akhlaur, the Vast Swamp, the Farsea Marshes, the River Umber, and a few locations along the coast of the Easting Reach. Rumor has it that, several times a year, the remains of the dead god Moander exudes one or more powerful skuz, possibly the forms of long-dead victims slowly excreted by the profane corpse's decay.

EBERRON

DRAGONMARKS

WARFORGED: FIERCE AND FURIOUS

by Nicolas Logue • introduction by Keith Baker • illustrated by Jon Hodgson

The warforged. We made them to die for us, and today we exploit them in our foundries and ignore them on our streets. But they are flourishing in the shadows. See for yourself. Go to one of the tavernsmiths of Ashblack, in the darkness below Sharn. Travel to the Mournland, if you dare, and see the communities they are building in the lands we have abandoned. Just take a moment to truly look at the next warforged you meet, to see the scars it earned defending your nation. Listen to the stories it has to tell. The warforged are not just tools, not identical suits of armor waiting to be used. They are alive. And your actions will determine whether they fight alongside us in the wars still to come, or whether they seek a destiny of their own.

—Tasker, Excoriate of House Sivis

QUICK AND EASY WARFORGED

Warforged are a construct race, mass-produced for battle. Most warforged designed to perform a specific function share a uniform appearance, distinguished only by the ghulra (the symbol on the forehead of the warforged, each as unique as a human fingerprint). Some warforged are more distinctive, however. Some are prototypes of designs later abandoned. Others are accidents created in flawed forges. And some warforged have modified their bodies in a quest for individual identity. By rolling on one or more of the following charts, you can generate idiosyncratic warforged PCs or NPCs. In addition, you can distinguish your warforged from the crowd with a specialized component or even membership in a clandestine affiliation operating without the knowledge of Eberron's dragonmarked races.

All of the changes listed below are cosmetic and do not affect the way the warforged works, nor do they change how any effect works on the warforged.

BODY TYPES

d10	Body Type
1	Short and stocky
2	Tall and lithe
3	Broad shouldered
4	Twisted and malformed
5	Long-limbed
6	Long torso
7	Hunched back
8	Triangular torso
9	Square torso
10	Blocky shoulders and chest

HEAD TYPES

d10	Head Type
1	Square head
2	Round head
3	Demonic face plate
4	Visored head with glowing eyes
5	Blank visage (no discernable features whatsoever)
6	Cycloptic visage
7	War helm head (bat winged, horned, or spiked)
8	Eyes flicker, flash, or spark
9	Face half one color, half another
10	Skull visage

BODY ACCENT COMPOSITION

d10	Composition
1	Copper
2	Iron
3	Bronze
4	Marble
5	Obsidian
6	Enameled bone
7	Blue steel
8	Burnished oak
9	Striped rattan
10	Combination (roll twice ignoring this result)

CONDITION OR ORNAMENTATION

d10	Appearance
1	Dragonmarked house symbol on chest
2	Lion-head-shaped shoulder guards
3	Dragonscale motifs on chest, shoulders, and back
4	Studded gauntlets, leg guards, and helms
5	Rusted or worn
6	Chipped or cracked
7	Mirrored sections or highly polished and burnished
8	Worn painted patterns
9	Etched with political or religious icons
10	Animated filaments undulate all over the body

PERSONALITY QUIRKS

d10	Quirk
1	Stutters or speaks in odd syntax (refers to self in third person, reverses word order, and so on)
2	Whispers all the time and then is angered when people do not understand
3	Tries to mimic human behavior in every way, right down to hygiene and human emotions
4	Stares at nonwarforged and enjoys how it makes them nervous or uncomfortable
5	Refers to all nonwarforged as "master" or "mistress"
6	Formerly used as an executioner and absent-mindedly recites the last words of the accused
7	Casually violent, remaining completely calm even when dismembering the corpses of foes
8	Refuses to fly in airships or take lightning rails, superstitious about using magic items as well
9	Pathological interest in dead creatures, studies death in all forms and finds it fascinating
10	Laughs at inappropriate times in a failed attempt to mimic humanoids

NEW COMPONENTS

The oldest and most useful individualizations of warforged come in the form of warforged components.

BATTLE VISOR (ATTACHED COMPONENT)

Battle visors gave warforged commanders of the Last War the ability to quickly assess magical threats on the battlefield.

Description: Possessing smooth lines and a sleek but powerful look, this mithral visor—of the kind commonly found on helmets of full plate armor—bears two vertical eyeslits connected by a single horizontal crossbar, giving it the look of two crosses touching in the middle.

Activation: Lowering the visor and locking it into place activates its powers.

Effect: With the visor locked in place, you gain the ability to discern magical auras and threats, as *greater arcane sight*. You can also *see invisible*, as the spell. Finally, you can automatically see any abjuration effect with a variable effect—thus, if a warrior is shrouded in *protection from elements*, you know which energy type he is protected against (this extends to spell immunity and other variable abjuration effects as well).

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate divination. CL 5th.

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, *greater arcane sight, see invisible*, 27,500 gp 2,200 XP, 55 days.

Weight: 3 lb.

Price: 55,000 gp.

CAMOUFLAGED COMPARTMENT (EMBEDDED COMPONENT)

This component was created to allow the smuggling of contraband inside warforged slaves or to aid in the concealment of dangerous weapons.

Description: This magically concealed compartment appears exactly like the surrounding part of the body into which it is built. The interior looks like a small dark space. These compartments are constructed to blend in with the warforged's body composition, requiring a DC 30 Search check to find.

Activation: Placing an item into the *camouflaged compartment* activates its effects.

Effect: Housed inside the chest, torso, or upper leg, this magically concealed compartment contains a 10-cubic-foot extradimensional space that can hold up to 50 pounds of gear. The *camouflaged compartment*'s opening is 6 inches across at its widest point.

Items locked within the compartment are warded by *Nystul's magic aura*, to appear nonmagical, and *obscure object*.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate abjuration. CL 5th.

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, *Nystul's magic aura, obscure object*, 6,000 gp, 480 XP, 12 days.

Weight: 1 lb.

Price: Price 12,000 gp.

NEW AFFILIATION

The following secretive group is composed entirely of warforged.

ELDRITCH CRUCIBLE

Symbol: A half-melted greatsword and molten crown consumed in flame.

Motto: We, forged from war, know best its strife.

Background, Goals, and Dreams: Shortly after the Treaty of Thronehold granted them certain rights, a handful of brilliant warforged pledged a secret union to right the unbalanced force of magic. The Last War made one thing clear to these warforged: magic has

become perverted into little more than a weapon used to enslave, kill, and ruin.

These warforged established the Eldritch Crucible to ensure magic's future implementation as a tool instead of a weapon. The crucible intends for arcane power to enlighten, to enhance, and to aid the populace of Khorvaire, rather than consume it in fire and blood. Its members seek to tip the scales of arcane balance away from annihilation. Currently, the Eldritch Crucible's chief concern is the destruction of dangerous artifacts, eldritch machines, and powerful arcane weapons of war. The crucible breaks down these implements of destruction when possible, harnessing their energy to create magic items capable of healing the sick or otherwise aiding society.

Enemies and Allies: Ironically, their own creators and former masters, House Cannith, prove the Eldritch Crucible's most dangerous adversaries. If Merrix d'Cannith and his closest associates spew bile at the merest mention of warforged liberation, their rage knows no measure when they hear rumors of this secret society out to undermine House Cannith's most lucrative enterprise: the creation and sale of magic armaments. Cannith agents hunt the crucible at every turn, and the warforged often raid house holdings and sabotage their operations.

The warforged of the crucible have few friends, although House Jorasco patronizes them on occasion in exchange for supplies of healing items. Additionally, they have allies among several high-placed veterans of the Last War who have had their fill of the battlefield atrocities begot by the artificer's arsenal.

Members: The bulk of the Eldritch Crucible is made up of warforged. Most are artificers, or at least are capable of arcane and divine magic, although the crucible counts rogues, monks, and even the odd extreme explorer among its agents.

Secrets: Perhaps the direst secret of the Eldritch Crucible's masters is their dark plan of self-destruction. The highest echelons of the crucible's leadership plan to commit mass suicide once the lion's share of potent magical weaponry (and the reformation or destruction of those capable of creating them) is accomplished. Revealing this secret would shake the very foundation of the Eldritch Crucible.

Type: Cabal

Scale: 12 (multiregional/several kingdoms)

Affiliation Score Criteria: All warforged are eligible for membership, although they must display willingness to set aside magical implements of destruction and dedicate themselves to peace. Nonwarforged must prove their worthiness by offering up a powerful magic weapon worth at least 25,000 gp for destruction by the Eldritch Crucible. Only good-aligned characters may become members of the Eldritch Crucible.

Criterion	Affiliation Score Modifier
Character Level	+1/2 PCs level
5 or more ranks in a Craft skill	+1
5 or more ranks in Knowledge (arcana)	+1
Warforged	+1
Artificer	+2
At least three item creation feats	+1
Magic weapon worth 50,000 gp brought to crucible	+1
Eldritch machine destroyed	+2
Slay warmonger or arms dealer	+1/8 creature's CR
Reform warmonger or arms dealer	+1/4 creature's CR
Use dangerous eldritch machine or artifact	–2
Reveal secrets or members' identities to enemies	–4
Stand by and watch innocents slaughtered	–4
Serve in military of any kind	–1
Attempt to control or enslave another being	–1

Affiliation Score	Title: Benefits and Duties
3 or lower	Novice member with no benefits
4-10	**Apprentice:** +2 on Knowledge (arcana) checks made concerning magically created items.
11–19	**Sentinel:** +2 bonus on all Diplomacy and Gather Information checks made among warforged.
20–24	**Purifier:** +2 to the result of an action point die rolled for a saving throw against harmful magic.
25–29	**Liberator:** Dispel one magical condition requiring *break enchantment* or *dispel magic*, but not an effect requiring *greater restoration, miracle, remove curse, remove disease,* or *wish.* This is a standard action that requires you to touch the subject. You may use this ability once per week.
30 or higher	**Peacemaker:** Gain either evasion or mettle (*Complete Divine,* 50).

Executive Powers: Craft, Raid, and Research.

 by Andy Collins • illustrated by Andrew Hou

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

This month, the Sage explores various questions related to monsters, Challenge Rating, and Encounter Level. If you have questions for the Sage, send them to **sageadvice@paizo.com**.

Do spell resistance, damage reduction, or caster level for spell-like abilities increase as a monster advances by Hit Dice?

Unless a monster's description states otherwise, most monster special abilities aren't Hit Dice-based, and thus are unaffected by advancement either by HD or by class level. (An exception is the save DC for any monster special ability, which is specifically described as using HD in its calculation).

Again, a DM can create exceptions to this rule; for example, increasing spell resistance by +1 per point of Challenge Rating increase (not per HD) is a good way of keeping a monster's SR relevant.

When I advance a couatl (or other creature with the "spells" special attack quality) by increasing its Hit Dice, what happens to its spellcasting ability?

Gaining a HD or class level generally has no effect on a monster's spellcasting ability. That said, it's reasonable to grant a monster who gains a level in the same class as its existing spellcasting ability another level of spellcasting in that class (as well as the 1st-level class features of the class).

For example, a rakshasa who gained a level of sorcerer should cast spells as an 8th-level sorcerer (7 levels from its race, plus 1 from its class), and should also gain the class features of a 1st-level sorcerer.

A succubus with four levels of wizard is an ECL 16 character (6 HD, LA +6, 4 class levels). How many experience points does she have, and how many does she need to become a 5th-level wizard? How much wealth should she have, if I'm creating her as a new character to play?

Use your character's Effective Character Level (ECL) to determine XP needed to gain a new level.

If you were creating a 4th-level succubus wizard from scratch, she'd have 120,000 XP (normal for a 16th-level character), and she'd need to earn another 16,000 to reach 17th level and take another level of wizard (or any other class), just like any other 16th-level character.

Assuming your campaign uses the normal wealth guidelines, your 4th-level succubus wizard should have about 260,000 gp worth of gear and treasure, as appropriate for being 16th level. After all, she's likely adventuring with other 16th-level characters, so it's only fair for her to have a similar amount of gear.

Can an animal increase its Intelligence when it gains an ability score increase at every 4 Hit Dice? If its Intelligence increases beyond 2, does it become a magical beast?

The Sage recommends that the DM *not* allow an animal (or any nonintelligent creature) to increase its Intelligence via HD advancement except as a very special case. Even the biggest 18-HD viper in the jungle shouldn't be able to have an Intelligence of 4.

Regardless, an animal's type doesn't change simply due to an Intelligence increase.

The *Monster Manual* says a creature isn't proficient with armor unless it is specifically listed as such (or is wearing armor in its description). What about warhorses and riding dogs, which are often protected by barding?

Technically, such creatures aren't proficient in armor, and thus suffer a penalty on attack rolls equal to the armor check penalty.

Many DMs choose to ignore this penalty for animals trained for combat (such as warhorses and riding dogs), which is perfectly reasonable.

The *Monster Manual* lists outsiders as having proficiency with all martial weapons. Does that mean that aasimars, tieflings, and genasis are automatically proficient with all martial weapons?

Yes.

Does a lawful good solar gain the lawful subtype as well as the good subtype? What about a chaotic good solar and the chaotic subtype?

No. Simply having a particular alignment doesn't mean a creature also gains an alignment subtype. In the case of angels, their "goodness" is so much more significant to their being than either law or chaos that they gain only the good alignment subtype, even if their alignment includes lawful or chaotic.

Does a celestial or fiendish animal, which has a 3 Intelligence, understand a language?

The celestial and fiendish templates don't indicate that the creature gains the ability to understand any particular language, but it's reasonable for a DM

to grant such a creature the rudimentary ability to understand a single spoken language. Celestial (for that template) or Abyssal or Infernal (for the fiendish template) seem like reasonable options, but a DM can alter this as desired.

How long does a beheaded troll live? The ogre mage's description states that a severed head or other vital organ must be reattached within 10 minutes or it dies.

All creatures with regeneration follow the normal rules for regeneration (presented most recently in *Monster Manual IV*), with exceptions as noted in the monster's description.

Unlike the ogre mage, a troll regrows any lost body part in 3d6 minutes, even its head (*Monster Manual*, 248).

Can a troll or other regenerating creature continue to act if it's been beheaded? Can it reattach its own severed head?

A headless regenerating creature (such as a troll) can't take any actions, because its brain can't send any signals to the rest of its body. Thus, it can't reattach its own head.

The Sage supposes that the severed head could still make bite attacks (or use any other special abilities that don't require a body or limbs), but since it can't really move around it's pretty easy for PCs to avoid that danger.

If a beheaded troll's body is destroyed with acid or fire but the detached head remains intact does the head eventually grow a new body? If the troll is simply beheaded and left for dead, does its head or its body regenerate?

A troll reduced to –10 hp is dead and does not regenerate, even if intact body parts remain.

If you chop a troll up into little bits but don't actually reduce its hp to –10, it will eventually regenerate entirely. As a rule, only the largest part of a troll grows into a new troll—you never get more than one troll from a pile of parts from a single troll.

If a vampire drains an animal's constitution to 0, does it create a vampiric animal?

No. The vampire's create spawn ability clearly indicates that it affects only humanoids or monstrous humanoids (*Monster Manual*, 252). This applies both to energy drain and Constitution drain.

In an encounter with creatures of mixed Challenge Ratings (for example, a CR 9 boss with a mix of CR 6 and CR 3 minions), how do you figure Encounter Level and XP?

The Encounter Level of a group of monsters is an estimate of the encounter's relative challenge. Its only value is as a signal to the DM regarding how dangerous the encounter might be to the PCs—it's never used to calculate XP or anything else.

To estimate the EL of a mixed group of monsters, calculate the EL for each group of monsters with the same CR as if each group was a separate encounter. Then, calculate the EL for the two lowest-EL groups of monsters as if each group

were a single monster with a CR equal to its EL. Repeat until you have only one number left: that's your EL estimate.

For example, imagine an encounter with a CR 9 boss, two CR 6 lieutenants, and four CR 3 minions. To estimate the EL for this encounter, start by determining the EL of each group of creatures: four CR 3 foes represent an EL 7 encounter, two CR 6 enemies are an EL 8 encounter, and a single CR 9 foe is an EL 9 encounter. A CR 7 plus a CR 8 monster is roughly an EL 9 encounter (it's a lot like the 8 + 6 mixed pair on Table 3–1: Encounter Numbers in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*), and when you add that to the other CR 9 component, you have an EL 11 encounter.

This isn't a perfect method—it can easily overestimate the value of low-CR minions, particularly in large numbers—but it's good in most cases. If you find that the EL for a mixed group is more than two or three points higher than the CR of the toughest single participant, take your estimate with a grain of salt.

Experience, on the other hand, is always calculated based on each monster's individual Challenge Rating, never by the Encounter Level. Each monster in an encounter is worth a number of XP based on its CR and the PCs' levels, and the total XP reward for the encounter is the sum of these values.

The encounter with a CR 9 creature, two CR 6 creatures, and four CR 3 creatures grants XP equal to the sum of the normal XP rewards for one CR 9 creature, two CR 6 creatures, and four CR 3 creatures. Assuming the party was 8th level, the reward would thus be 7,600 XP (3,600 XP for the CR 9 foe, 1,200 XP for each of the CR 6 enemies, and 400 XP for each of the CR 3 monsters), divided by the number of characters.

I understand that CR, and thus EL, is based on challenging a party of four player characters. How should I adjust the EL of an encounter when the party consists of other than four characters?

A good rule of thumb is to increase an encounter's EL by 1 when you add a character to the adventuring party. You can do this either by increasing the number of foes present or by toughening up one or two of the enemies.

Be careful about overloading your encounters for large groups of PCs—even a group of eight PCs can't necessarily deal with an encounter with three or four times the normal number of foes, particularly if those foes can easily gang up on a single PC. One hill giant probably can't take out a 7th-level fighter, but three or four definitely can, even if that fighter has a half-dozen buddies standing behind him waiting to take their turn in initiative.

On the other hand, if there are fewer than four characters in the party, simply reducing the EL might not go far enough. It's possible, even likely, that such a group lacks crucial capabilities expected of a typical adventuring party, such as healing, melee defense, or ranged attacks, and thus might not be able to deal with normal-style encounters even if you significantly reduce the EL.

In such a case, the DM must adjust the encounters on a case-by-case basis so that the party isn't unduly punished for their lack of capabilities, perhaps by using monsters with unusually low attack modifiers and damage values (for groups lacking a fighter or similar character), or by minimizing the use of monsters with long-distance attacks (for groups lacking a wizard, archer, or other ranged-attack character).

Per the errata for wild shape, despite an altered Constitution score the character's hit points do not change accordingly. Does this mean that regardless of Constitution changes while wild shaped a character's hit points are unaffected?

No. Any changes to a wild shaped character's Constitution score that occur after the change (such as a timely *bear's endurance* spell or a Constitution-damaging poison) would have the full normal effect (including altering hit points).

Dragon

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 by Hal Maclean • illustrated by Julie Dillion

CRIMINAL SPECIALISTS

A rogue (or other class that meets the following prerequisites) may specialize in one particular type of crime, much like a wizard might specialize in a school of magic. Such criminal specialization requires four mandatory skills and prohibits two other skills (the specialist can never put ranks into these skills, but he may still use them untrained). In addition, as long as the specialist takes an appropriate Skill Focus feat he also gains a unique special ability at the listed level, which he can use only if he maintains a maximum number of ranks in the listed skills (even if he multiclasses). Any class with all six of the listed skills as class skills qualifies and allows a member of that class to become a specialist in the listed field.

Note: The rules presented in this article are optional. You should check with your DM before creating a criminal specialist character.

BEGGAR

As your childhood ended, the faces of those you implored for alms grew harder, causing you to learn how to feign injuries and infirmities, anything to stoke a charitable impulse. You have learned how to use those skills to protect yourself.

Prerequisites: Bluff, Disguise, Sleight of Hand, Spot, Skill Focus (Disguise).

Forbidden Skills: Disable Device and Open Lock.

1st Level—Playing Possum (Ex): You may attempt to gain a temporary edge in combat by shamming a debilitating injury, such as blindness or a missing limb. This requires 1 minute of advance preparation, a disguise kit, and a Disguise check. The next intelligent foe you encounter must succeed at an opposed Spot check or else he is flat-footed against your first attack. Your first attack in the combat must be made against this foe. If you encounter multiple foes, they all get a chance to see through your disguise, but you only gain the benefit of this ability on the first attack you make.

BLACKMAILER

In your life you have developed a talent for remaining in the background while your targets committed their indiscretions. You can leap quickly into the foreground when you need to, taking your victims by surprise and using the threat of their secrets to cow them into obeying your forcefully delivered commands.

Prerequisites: Decipher Script, Gather Information, Intimidate, Search, Skill Focus (Intimidate).

Forbidden Skills: Disable Device and Open Lock.

3rd Level—Vilify (Ex): You can attempt to uncover some secret humiliation of a particular foe by carefully sifting through rumor and idle speculation. You must spend at least 8 hours chasing gossip in an area your target has frequented within the last month followed by a Gather Information check (DC 10 + target's CR). If you succeed at this Gather Information check you may, at

any time in the following month, make an Intimidate check against your target as a full-round action. At any time in the next hour, as long as you are not in combat, you may issue a *command* (as the spell) at your target as a standard action. The save DC of your *command* effect equals the result of your Intimidate check. This is a language-dependant mind-affecting ability.

If your Gather Information check fails you must wait at least six months before trying again against that particular target. If your target simply has no humiliating indiscretions in her past (as determined by the DM) you cannot use this ability against that target.

FENCE

You learned to look for every defect in an item and never hesitate to use even the most infinitesimal flaw as grounds to lower your price. These skills proved equally useful when dealing with any kind of object, valuable or not.

Prerequisites: Appraise, Bluff, Forgery, Sense Motive, Skill Focus (Appraise).

Forbidden Skills: Climb and Tumble.

6th Level—Fracture (Ex): Your trained eye can identify and exploit the subtle, hidden defects of objects. After your first successful attack against a construct or object, you may make an Appraise check (DC 15 for an object or DC 15 + creature's CR for a construct). For every point by which you succeed at this check you can ignore one point of hardness or one point of DR for all later attacks against that construct or object. You can only use this ability with melee attacks.

GOON

You possess a singular enthusiasm for breaking legs—or heads—upon command, but you also learned to apply your intellect, to let rumor guide you to your targets and to find the kernels of truth within their pleas and evasions.

Prerequisites: Bluff, Gather Information, Intimidate, Sense Motive, Skill Focus (Intimidate).

Forbidden Skills: Decipher Script and Use Magic Device.

6th Level—Browbeat (Ex): You can, as a full-round action, make a single melee attack against an opponent. If you hit and deal damage, you can immediately follow it with an Intimidate check (DC 15 + target's CR). If you succeed in this check your foe becomes shaken until the end of your next turn. For each round you continue to attack the same target, you gain a cumulative +1 bonus on your Intimidate checks. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

KIDNAPPER

Displaying a fiendish ingenuity for knots and bindings, you drifted into criminal gangs that made their living by snatching people and holding them for ransom.

Prerequisites: Climb, Disguise, Move Silently, Use Rope, Skill Focus (Use Rope).

Forbidden Skills: Diplomacy and Tumble.

1st Level—Hobble (Ex): You can attempt to restrict or bind any foe you manage to catch unawares. Whenever you face a flat-footed opponent no more than one size category larger than you, you may attempt a melee touch attack as a full-round action. You must have a length of rope at least 20 feet long in hand when you make this touch attack. If you succeed, you can wrap your target's arms and legs in rope. Make a Use Rope check with a –4 penalty. Your target moves at half his normal speed and takes a –2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity scores until he escapes your knots, requiring a full-round action and an Escape Artist check (DC equals your Use Rope check).

LOOKOUT

While others spent their time housebreaking or shaking down tourists you found a comfortable niche by merely offering advanced warning of approaching danger. Your keen senses made you a welcome addition to any criminal enterprise.

Prerequisites: Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Skill Focus (Spot).

Forbidden Skills: Appraise and Disable Device.

3rd Level—Perceive (Su): As a full-round action, you can gain one of the following effects until your next turn: blindsense, low-light vision, scent, or tremorsense. You cannot gain an effect you already possess. This ability requires you to concentrate the entire time. If you are attacked or otherwise distracted, you must succeed at a DC 20 Concentration check or lose the effect.

PICKPOCKET

Through trial and error (and more than one night in jail), you mastered the art of taking what you needed from passersby—the fatter and wealthier the better. As you grew older, you learned the hard way that not all wealthy folk flaunted their jewels unarmed. After several lengthy stays at the local temples, you learned to identify (and disarm) those who carried protection.

Prerequisites: Hide, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, Spot, Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand).

Forbidden Skills: Disable Device and Sense Motive.

6th Level—Snatch Weapon (Ex): You can attempt to strip a creature of a sheathed weapon by making a Sleight of Hand check (DC 20 + target's CR) as a full-round action. Your target must be flat-footed to you. You can snatch a light weapon (based on your size, not your target's) without penalty, a one-handed weapon with a –4 penalty, and a two-handed weapon with a –8 penalty. You cannot snatch a weapon too large for you to wield. If you succeed in this check, you gain possession of the weapon. You must have enough free hands available when you attempt the snatch to wield the weapon properly (i.e., you must have at least one free hand when attempting to snatch a light or one-handed weapon and two free hands when attempting to snatch a two-handed weapon).

When you use this ability, your Sleight of Hand check is opposed by the Spot checks of those nearby. The success of observers (including your victim) doesn't prevent you from performing the snatch, just from doing it unnoticed.

by Amber E. Scott • illustrated by Julie Dillion

SORCERER GUIDE

This guide employs charts, rules clarifications, feat and prestige class suggestions, and rulebook references to enhance and ease the playability of the sorcerer. Although intended for the sorcerer, other spontaneous spellcasting classes, such as the favored soul, might find these details useful.

SPONTANEOUS CASTING

A sorcerer possesses a limited number of known spells, which he can cast in any combination provided he does not exceed his number of spell slots per day.

Increased Charisma: If a sorcerer benefits from a Charisma-boosting effect, such as from a *cloak of charisma*, he gains bonus spell slots for his enhanced Charisma, according to the chart on page 8 of the *Player's Handbook*. To gain these extra spell slots, the sorcerer must wear the Charisma-enhancing item throughout his rest period prior to his daily meditation, as well as throughout the meditation period.

Spell Swapping: A sorcerer may swap one of his known spells for another at 4th level and every even-numbered level after that. Any prestige class that grants an increase to the sorcerer's spellcasting level also grants him the spell swap ability at the appropriate levels.

Feats: Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Counterspell, Magical Aptitude, Spell Focus, Spell Penetration, (*Player's Handbook*); Ascetic Mage, Extraordinary Concentration, Extraordinary Spell Aim, Mobile Spellcasting (*Complete Adventurer*); Arcane Mastery, Battle Caster, Extra Slot, Extra Spell, Innate Spell, Ranged Spell Specialization, Touch Spell Specialization (*Complete Arcane*); Arcane Disciple, Spell Focus (Chaos, Evil, Good, Law) (*Complete Divine*); Arcane Consumption, Arcane Toughness, Dampen Spell, Elven Spell Lore, Vatic Gaze (*Player's Handbook II*).

Prestige Classes: Arcane archer, arcane trickster, archmage, dragon disciple, eldritch knight, mystic theurge (*Dungeon Master's Guide*); daggerspell mage (*Complete Adventurer*); alienist, argent savant, fatespinner, initiate of the sevenfold veil, master transmogrifist, mindbender, wild mage (*Complete Arcane*); divine oracle, geomancer, rainbow servant, void disciple (*Complete Divine*).

METAMAGIC FEATS

If a sorcerer applies a metamagic feat to one of his spontaneous spells, the spell takes one full-round action to cast. Spells with a casting time greater than one action take an additional full-round action to cast when modified with a metamagic feat. This applies to spells modified with metamagic feats cast from metamagic rods, so a sorcerer cannot use a *rod of quickening* to quicken his spells.

- The Arcane Preparation feat from *Complete Arcane* allows a sorcerer to prepare spells ahead of time, just as a wizard does. A sorcerer may prepare such a spell with a metamagic feat in order to avoid the increased casting time.
- If a sorcerer applies more than one metamagic feat to a spell, the casting time does not further increase.

Feats: All metamagic feats except for Quicken Spell (*Player's Handbook*); Black Lore of Moil,

Born of Three Thunders, Chain Spell, Cooperative Spell, Delay Spell, Energy Admixture, Energy Substitution, Explosive Spell, Fortify Spell, Lord of the Uttercold, Nonlethal Substitution, Persistent Spell, Repeat Spell, Sanctum Spell, Sculpt Spell, Split Ray, Sudden Empower, Sudden Extend, Sudden Maximize, Sudden Silent, Sudden Still, Sudden Widen, Twin Spell (*Complete Arcane*); Consecrate Spell, Corrupt Spell, Rapid Spell, Reach Spell, Transdimensional Spell (*Complete Divine*).

The Metamagic Feat Level Adjustments table represents all books not specific to any one campaign setting, with the following abbreviations: BOED = *Book of Exalted Deeds*, BOVD = *Book of Vile Darkness*, CA = *Complete Arcane*, CD = *Complete Divine*, CM = *Complete Mage*, CS = *Cityscape*, LM = *Libris Mortis*, LoM = *Lords of Madness*, PHB = *Player's Handbook*, PHBII = *Player's Handbook II*.

Prestige Classes: Loremaster (*Dungeon Master's Guide*); mage of the arcane order (*Complete Arcane*).

SPELLCRAFT

Spellcraft DC	Task
13	When using *read magic*, identify a *glyph of warding*. No action required.
15 + spell level	Identify a spell being cast. (You must see or hear the spell's verbal or somatic components.) No action required. No retry.
15 + spell level	When casting *detect magic*, determine the school of magic involved in the aura of a single item or creature you can see. (If the aura is not a spell effect, the DC is 15 + one-half caster level.) No action required.
19	When using *read magic*, identify a *symbol*. No action required.
20	Draw a diagram to allow *dimensional anchor* to be cast on a *magic circle* spell. Requires 10 minutes.
20 + spell level	Identify a spell that's already in place and in effect. You must be able to see or detect the effects of the spell. No action required. No retry.
20 + spell level	Identify materials created or shaped by magic, such as noting that an iron wall is the result of a *wall of iron* spell. No action required. No retry.
20 + spell level	Decipher a written spell (such as a scroll) without using *read magic*. One try per day. Requires a full-round action. No retry. The DM makes this check.
25	Identify a potion. Requires 1 minute. No retry.
25 + spell level	After rolling a saving throw against a spell targeted on you, determine what that spell was. No action required. No retry.
30	Understand a strange or unique magical effect, such as the effects of a magic stream. Time required varies. No retry.

METAMAGIC FEAT LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS

Metamagic Feat	Spell Level	Source
Black Lore of Moil	+0	CA
Blistering Spell	+1	PHBII
Born of Three Thunders	+0	CA
Chain Spell	+3	CA
City Magic	+0	CS
Consecrate Spell	+1	CD
Corrupt Spell	+1	CD
Deceptive Spell	+1	CS
Delay Spell	+3	CA
Earthbound Spell	+2	PHBII
Empower Spell	+2	PHB
Energize Spell	+1	LM
Energy Admixture	+4	CA
Energy Substitution	+0	CA
Enervate Spell	+2	LM
Enlarge Spell	+1	PHB
Explosive Spell	+2	CA
Extend Spell	+1	PHB
Fell Animate	+3	LM
Fell Drain	+2	LM
Fell Frighten	+2	LM
Fell Weaken	+1	LM
Flash Frost Spell	+1	PHBII
Imbued Summoning	+1	PHBII
Invisible Spell	+0	CS
Lord of the Uttercold	+0	CA
Maximize Spell	+3	PHB
Nonlethal Substitution	+1	CA
Ocular Spell	+2	LoM
Persistent Spell	+6	CA
Purify Spell	+1	BOED
Rapid Spell	+1	CD
Reach Spell	+2	CD
Repeat Spell	+3	CA
Retributive Spell	+1	CM
Sanctum Spell	+0	CA
Sculpt Spell	+1	CA
Silent Spell	+1	PHB
Smiting Spell	+1	PHBII
Split Ray	+2	CA
Still Spell	+1	PHB
Transdimensional Spell	+1	CD
Twin Spell	+4	CA
Violate Spell	+1	BOVD
Widen Spell	+3	PHB

by David Schwartz • illustrated by Julie Dillion

DIVINE

Aztec Mythos I

Among the many deities revered by the people of the Central American highlands, the two most important are Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca. These two deities often take on adversarial roles, with Quetzalcoatl as the creator and Tezcatlipoca as the destroyer. On rare occasions, however, they do cooperate. Although individually powerful, only by working together could these two spirits create the world.

Having done so, together, they fought over who would be the sun. Tezcatlipoca—who was dark as shadow—stole the newly made sun and tied it to his waist. Thanks to his darkness, though, he could only illuminate half the day. Eventually, Quetzalcoatl took a gigantic stick and knocked him out of the sky. Quetzalcoatl then took up position as the sun.

After the world was settled, Quetzalcoatl took human form and lived among the Toltecs. He gave them the tools of civilization—agriculture and crafts, governance and piety—and served as an advisor to their rulers. Tezcatlipoca grew envious of Quetzalcoatl's eminence and he too took human form. Unlike Quetzalcoatl, though, Tezcatlipoca used his powers to cause mischief and discord among the Toltecs. He enthralled whole villages and led them to perform self-destructive acts. With the aid of his sister Tlazoteotl, Tezcatlipoca even tricked Quetzalcoatl into becoming drunk and debasing himself. So ashamed was Quetzalcoatl that he ordered his city of Tula razed and all its treasures buried. Then he went to the coast and sailed off on a raft of snakes, vowing to return one day and reclaim his kingdom. Not long after he left, the Toltec empire collapsed.

Without the counterbalance of Quetzalcoatl, Tezcatlipoca is free to work his evil in the world unhindered, and many look toward the day when the Feathered Serpent returns.

QUETZALCOATL

Greater God (Lawful Good)

Quetzalcoatl is the god of order and goodness. With Tezcatlipoca, he created the world and the creatures that live on it. The author of civilization, all wisdom and knowledge flow from him. He served as the second sun.

Quetzalcoatl is a god in exile. During the time of the Toltecs, he led by example. The deception of Tezcatlipoca made him leave the mortal realms, however, and now men must rely on their own recognizance to determine what is good and orderly. Although his clergy strives to maintain the ideals Quetzalcoatl embodies, his clerics look forward to the day when the Feathered Serpent returns.

Quetzalcoatl is depicted with pale skin, a dark, full beard, and wearing either long, concealing robes or the feathered garb of a noble.

Despite his absence from the mortal realm, Quetzalcoatl remains a popular god. The clerics of Quetzalcoatl teach the values of adherence to social conventions, kindness to others, and peaceful relationship with neighbors. Civility separates humans from the beasts, and it is through civilization that humans collectively achieve perfection.

Portfolio: Air, civilization.

Domains: Air, Good, Law, Protection, Travel.

Favored Weapon: Mace.

Cleric Training: A cleric of Quetzalcoatl must possess knowledge of civics and literature, as he is expected to pass along his wisdom either as an advisor to a noble ruler or as a teacher in the *calmecac* (a religious school).

Quests: Typical quests undertaken in the name of Quetzalcoatl include helping a good prince become king over his evil rivals, protecting a village from a rampaging dragon, and foiling the schemes of Tezcatlipoca's minions.

Prayers: Although he no longer lives incarnate among the people, Quetzalcoatl still grants power to his clergy. Prayers to Quetzalcoatl often begin with a plea for his swift return.

Temples: Temples to Quetzalcoatl are distinctly circular in a culture that favors rectangular buildings. Found in every city, temples of the Feathered Serpent also dot the summits of tall mountain peaks. Clerics maintain these temples in pristine condition for Quetzalcoatl's return.

Rites: Celebrations honoring Quetzalcoatl are brightly colored affairs filled with music and dance. Unlike most other Aztec gods, Quetzalcoatl does not demand human sacrifice. In addition to traditional rites, clerics have recently added a new duty: a watch is maintained along the east coast, waiting for the god's return.

Herald and Allies: Quetzalcoatl's herald is a 20th-level cleric recognizable by his pale skin and full beard. Allies are hound archons, couatls, and planetar angels.

FROM AZTEC TO OLMAN

This article kicks off a new series presenting everything your divine character needs to worship real-world deities. This month, we start with deities from the Aztec pantheon, some of whom the Olman of the Savage Tide Adventure Path worship. Let us know which other pantheons you'd like to see represented by sending an email to **scalemail@paizo.com**.

TEZCATLIPOCA

Greater God (Chaotic Evil)

Tezcatlipoca (the Smoky Mirror) is the god of chaos and evil. He personifies the harmful and disruptive forces of nature and is the patron of sinful pleasures and arcane magic. He encourages people to escape the bonds placed on them by society and fate, and thus the lowly and downtrodden worship him—as do the ambitious. Despite his evil, he is the vessel by which people gain absolution for their sins from the gods. Tlazoteotl, goddess of filth, is his sister.

Tezcatlipoca aided Quetzalcoatl in creating the world and served as the first sun, but he wasn't bright enough to last the whole day. Quetzalcoatl eventually knocked him out of the sky, and Tezcatlipoca later became the god of night.

Tezcatlipoca is depicted as black skinned with a yellow striped face. He carries a mirror of polished obsidian (a traditional divining tool). Tezcatlipoca sometimes takes the form of a jaguar, his sacred animal.

Tezcatlipoca encourages his followers to push the boundaries of ethics and morality, and he teaches that the strong-willed can change their fate.

Portfolio: Night, mischief.

Domains: Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Magic, Trickery.

Favored Weapon: Dagger.

Cleric Training: Clerics of Tezcatlipoca, like those of other Aztec gods, refrain from regular bathing. As such, dried blood and filth cake them as a result of their foul rituals. Tezcatlipoca is the patron of diviners, and his clerics train in a number of traditional divining methods. Some of his clergy take levels in wizard or sorcerer, often specializing as diviners or illusionists.

Quests: A follower of Tezcatlipoca might never know if a quest he undertakes is part of the god's greater plan or merely a random act of destruction. Typical quests include embarrassing a respected ruler, stealing a powerful magic item, and playing a deadly trick on an entire village.

Prayers: Many pray to Tezcatlipoca seeking absolution for their sins or reprieve from divine misfortunes. Others who call on the god seek to bend the rules—whether societal, such as serfs who aspire to higher castes, or natural, such as wizards researching new spells.

Temples: Although undeniably evil, Tezcatlipoca is an important and sometimes even beneficial deity, and temples to the Smoky Mirror are found in all major cities. Carvings of jaguars feature prominently on these temples.

Rites: Unlike the public rituals of most of the gods, worship of Tezcatlipoca is mostly performed behind closed doors. Participants in these rituals often engage in acts of debauchery as a form of catharsis.

Herald and Allies: Tezcatlipoca works mischief through his herald, a 20th-level sorcerer. Allies are howlers, glabrezu demons, and nalfeshnee demons.

by Richard Farrese • illustrated by Julie Dillion

Burning Gauntlet Sisterhood

The history of the Burning Gauntlet Sisterhood is closely related to that of its founder, the warrior Siltarra, also known as the Unruly Maiden. A human born in the shackles of slavery, Siltarra witnessed the cruelty of her master toward the people she cared for. Outraged by the unjust treatment she and her family suffered at their owner's hands and revolted by her station in life, Siltarra took action. At the age of twelve she freed herself, her family, and a half-dozen other slaves from their bonds by killing their master and his four heavily armed guards. A small revolt ensued, allowing many of the slaves she had freed to escape.

Siltarra, however, had only just begun. Convinced of the justice of her cause, she took it upon herself to free others who suffered as she had, and she quickly became a champion for slaves everywhere. Shortly after winning her freedom, Siltarra honed her combat skills, kept herself informed of the activities of slavers, and made new allies and contacts with ex-slaves and abolitionists. For the rest of her adolescence, Siltarra organized raids and revolts against slavers, slave owners, and anyone else who forced humanoids into servitude. She died young, falling to the sword of a slaver during a failed raid in her mid-twenties. A few years after her death, her adolescent daughter Varnielle founded the guild that eventually became the Burning Gauntlet Sisterhood. For the past century, the sisterhood has fought against slavery and those who benefit from it.

To external appearances, the Burning Gauntlet Sisterhood is no more than a group of women warriors who meet to exchange information on upcoming events (such as tournaments and other competitions), to trade contacts and work opportunities, and to perfect their skills in battle. In major population centers, where more agents of the sisterhood work, the group operates as a typical fighting guild. While officially maintaining this front, the members of this exclusive organization fight for more noble dreams than simply becoming better warriors. Their ultimate but rarely stated goal is to eradicate humanoid enslavement from the world. Although no official records of this seemingly impossible ambition are kept in any of the various guildhalls of the Burning Gauntlet, its leaders keep a close watch on slavers, slave buyers, and the markets that sell humanoids.

BURNING GAUNTLET SISTERHOOD

Symbol: The sisterhood's insignia is a clenched steel gauntlet enshrouded in purplish-red flames and raised against a black canvas reminiscent of the night sky.

Backgrounds, Goals, and Dreams: The Burning Gauntlet Sisterhood is a highly exclusive guild of women warriors secretly dedicated to the eradication of slavery throughout the world. Operating in most major cities as well as in various remote locations all over the world, the sisterhood is extremely careful when selecting its members, its enemies, and the missions it chooses to involve itself in. Members of the affiliation often go to great lengths—including sacrificing themselves—to free slaves, hunt down slavers and slave traders, and punish those who keep other humanoids of any race captive.

Members: The Burning Gauntlet Sisterhood surreptitiously seeks out new members while pursuing or raiding slavers. Under the guise of an exclusive warrior guild, its members carefully

select candidates from among those who prove themselves skilled in battle. Women of any race whose principles and values mirror those of the sisterhood (i.e., are good aligned) and who are willing to dedicate their lives to oppose slavery can become members. While most active members are paladins, fighters, and rangers, the sisterhood also accepts rogues and clerics.

When this organization identifies a potential candidate, one of its experienced members contacts her. Without revealing the name of the order to which she belongs, the Burning Gauntlet sister explains the true goals and purposes of her guild. If the candidate expresses interest, the Burning Gauntlet sister invites her to take part in a raid (if the candidate has experience as a warrior) or a mission of subterfuge or reconnaissance (if her skills run more toward stealth). When possible, this training mission results in the freeing of slaves. Once she proves herself worthy, the candidate must wait several days before a different sister formally invites her to join. This "cooling off" period allows an unsure candidate time to work out her feelings and ensures that an apparently enthusiastic candidate remains interested over time. When the candidate accepts her invitation she is officially introduced into the Burning Gauntlet Sisterhood.

Vandia Silvermane (LG female elf paladin 4) is the current Mother of Virtue (the title given to the leader of the sisterhood). In addition to running the most important guildhall of the organization, Vandia must also coordinate the worldwide activities of the order through the various guildhalls. She spends much of her time ensuring that each of the sisterhood's various guildhalls work toward the same goal.

Type: Fighting company.
Scale: 12 (multiregional).

Criterion	Affiliation Score Modifier
Character level	1/2 PC's level
Paladin	+2
Was once a slave	+1
Aid abolitionists	+1
Hide or house escaped slaves	+2
Base attack bonus	+1 for ever +5 of base attack bonus
Gather Information	+1 per 5 ranks
Free slaves	+1 per successful mission
Mistreat a slave	–3
Associate with a slaver	–5
Own a slave	–20

SLAVE SEEKER

You are adept at locating slavers, slave owners, and others who support slavery.

Prerequisites: Affiliation score 8 or higher in the Burning Gauntlet Sisterhood.

Benefit: Gather Information is always a class skill for you.

You also gain a +4 insight bonus on Gather Information checks made to locate slaves, slavers, slave owners, or an organization that actively supports slavery.

Titles, Benefits, and Duties: The Burning Gauntlet Sisterhood offers its members various guildhalls in which they can meet other sisters, purchase warrior's gear at fair prices (usually the prices listed in the *Player's Handbook*, but occasionally with discounts as high as 10%), exchange goods and services, and find employment as warriors. Most of the sisterhood's guildhalls also offer lodging and warm meals at economical prices, but in small towns or in areas where slavery is widely practiced, these places are too small, secret, or impoverished to offer the full benefits found in larger guildhalls. Sisters also organize raids and other missions against slavers from within the safety of their guildhalls.

A guild mother (always of the rank of shield mistress), responsible for a particular location (typically a large city and its environs or a wide rural area that includes several villages), heads each guildhall. Under the guild mother serve a number of sword bearers with unique titles—two governesses appointed to the daily affairs of the guildhall, one spy mistress responsible for maintaining accurate information on slavers and their clients, and a taskmistress in charge of a handful of trainers.

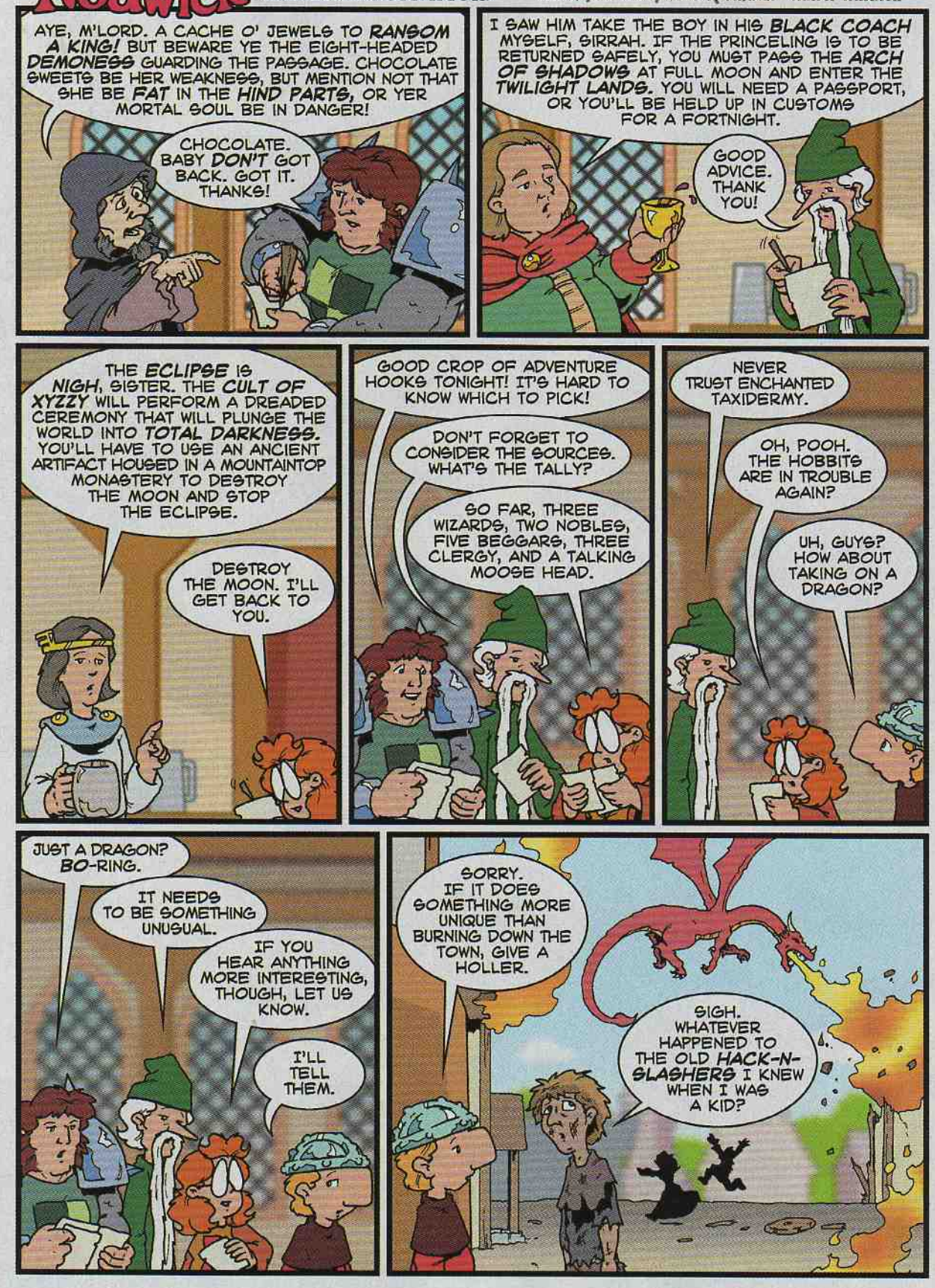
Affiliation Score	Title: Benefits and Duties
3 or lower	No affiliation
4–10	**Maiden:** You are considered a novice by other members of the sisterhood and are sometimes called upon to participate in the organization's missions.
11–20	**Lady:** You are considered to be a competent member of the group and often have a chance to go on missions on behalf of the sisterhood. +2 on all Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with other members of the sisterhood.
21–29	**Sword Bearer:** You are respected by your peers and are often asked to plan missions or lead groups of sisters on raids. +2 on damage rolls made against all known slavers and slave owners.
30 or higher	**Shield Mistress:** You are a hero in the organization. +4 on all Charisma-based checks when dealing with other members of the sisterhood, as well as current or former slaves. –2 penalty when dealing with slavers and slave owners.

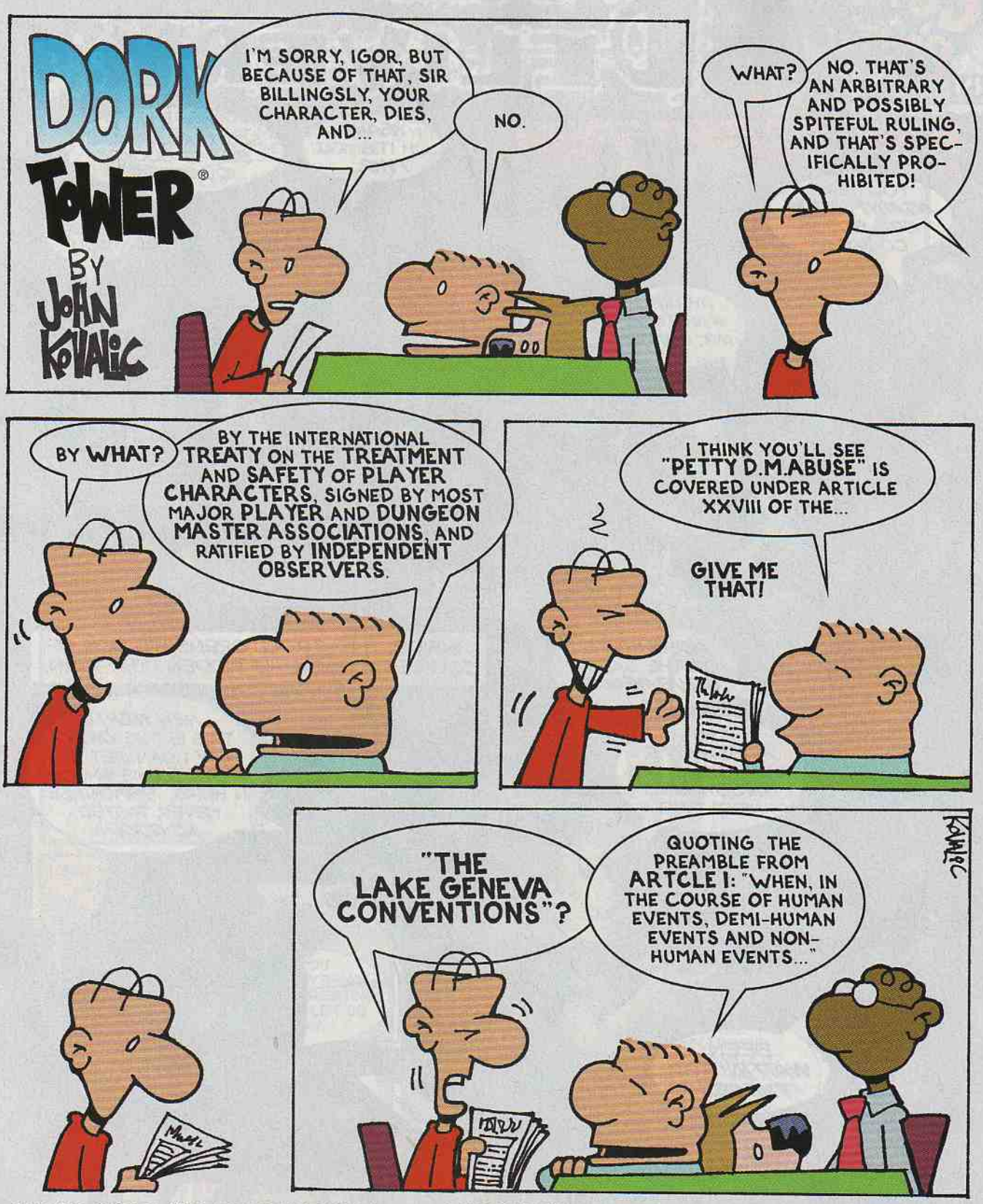
Executive Powers: Raid, research, war.

Nodwick

by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

Gossip is the art of saying nothing in a way that leaves practically nothing unsaid. - Walter Winchell


AYE, M'LORD. A CACHE O' JEWELS TO RANSOM A KING! BUT BEWARE YE THE EIGHT-HEADED DEMONESS GUARDING THE PASSAGE. CHOCOLATE SWEETS BE HER WEAKNESS, BUT MENTION NOT THAT SHE BE FAT IN THE HIND PARTS, OR YER MORTAL SOUL BE IN DANGER!
CHOCOLATE. BABY DON'T GOT BACK. GOT IT. THANKS!
I SAW HIM TAKE THE BOY IN HIS BLACK COACH MYSELF, SIRRAH. IF THE PRINCELING IS TO BE RETURNED SAFELY, YOU MUST PASS THE ARCH OF SHADOWS AT FULL MOON AND ENTER THE TWILIGHT LANDS. YOU WILL NEED A PASSPORT, OR YOU'LL BE HELD UP IN CUSTOMS FOR A FORTNIGHT.
GOOD ADVICE. THANK YOU!
THE ECLIPSE IS NIGH, SISTER. THE CULT OF XYZZY WILL PERFORM A DREADED CEREMONY THAT WILL PLUNGE THE WORLD INTO TOTAL DARKNESS. YOU'LL HAVE TO USE AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT HOUSED IN A MOUNTAINTOP MONASTERY TO DESTROY THE MOON AND STOP THE ECLIPSE.
DESTROY THE MOON. I'LL GET BACK TO YOU.
GOOD CROP OF ADVENTURE HOOKS TONIGHT! IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHICH TO PICK!
DON'T FORGET TO CONSIDER THE SOURCES. WHAT'S THE TALLY?
SO FAR, THREE WIZARDS, TWO NOBLES, FIVE BEGGARS, THREE CLERGY, AND A TALKING MOOSE HEAD.
NEVER TRUST ENCHANTED TAXIDERMY.
OH, POOH. THE HOBBITS ARE IN TROUBLE AGAIN?
UH, GUYS? HOW ABOUT TAKING ON A DRAGON?
JUST A DRAGON? BO-RING.
IT NEEDS TO BE SOMETHING UNUSUAL.
IF YOU HEAR ANYTHING MORE INTERESTING, THOUGH, LET US KNOW.
I'LL TELL THEM.
SORRY. IF IT DOES SOMETHING MORE UNIQUE THAN BURNING DOWN THE TOWN, GIVE A HOLLER.
SIGH. WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE OLD HACK-N-SLASHERS I KNEW WHEN I WAS A KID?


DORK TOWER®
BY JOHN KOVALIC
I'M SORRY, IGOR, BUT BECAUSE OF THAT, SIR BILLINGSLY, YOUR CHARACTER, DIES, AND...
NO.
WHAT?
NO. THAT'S AN ARBITRARY AND POSSIBLY SPITEFUL RULING, AND THAT'S SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED!
BY WHAT?
BY THE INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON THE TREATMENT AND SAFETY OF PLAYER CHARACTERS, SIGNED BY MOST MAJOR PLAYER AND DUNGEON MASTER ASSOCIATIONS, AND RATIFIED BY INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS.
I THINK YOU'LL SEE "PETTY D.M.ABUSE" IS COVERED UNDER ARTICLE XXVIII OF THE...
GIVE ME THAT!
"THE LAKE GENEVA CONVENTIONS"?
QUOTING THE PREAMBLE FROM ARTCLE I: "WHEN, IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS, DEMI-HUMAN EVENTS AND NON-HUMAN EVENTS..."
KOVALIC

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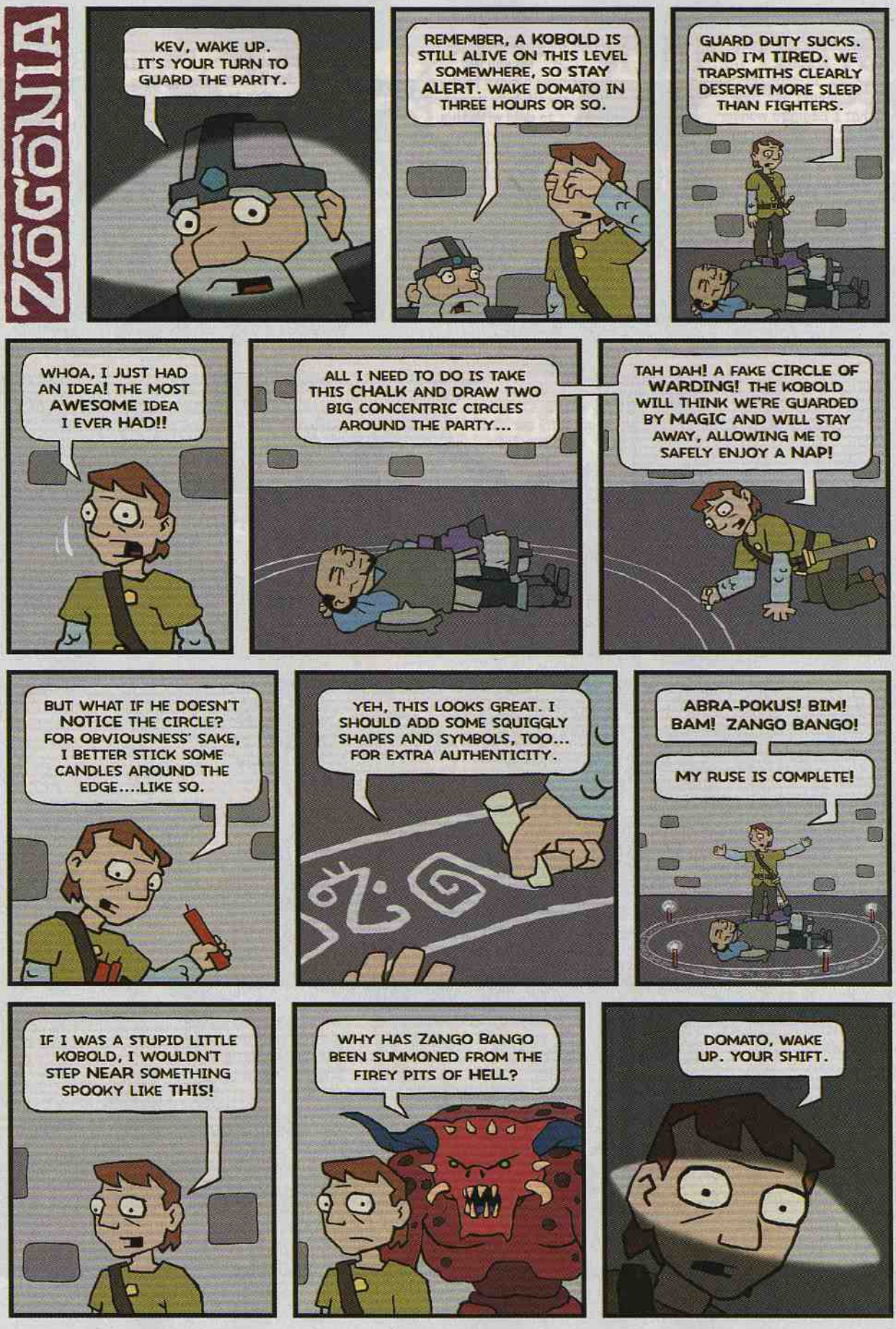
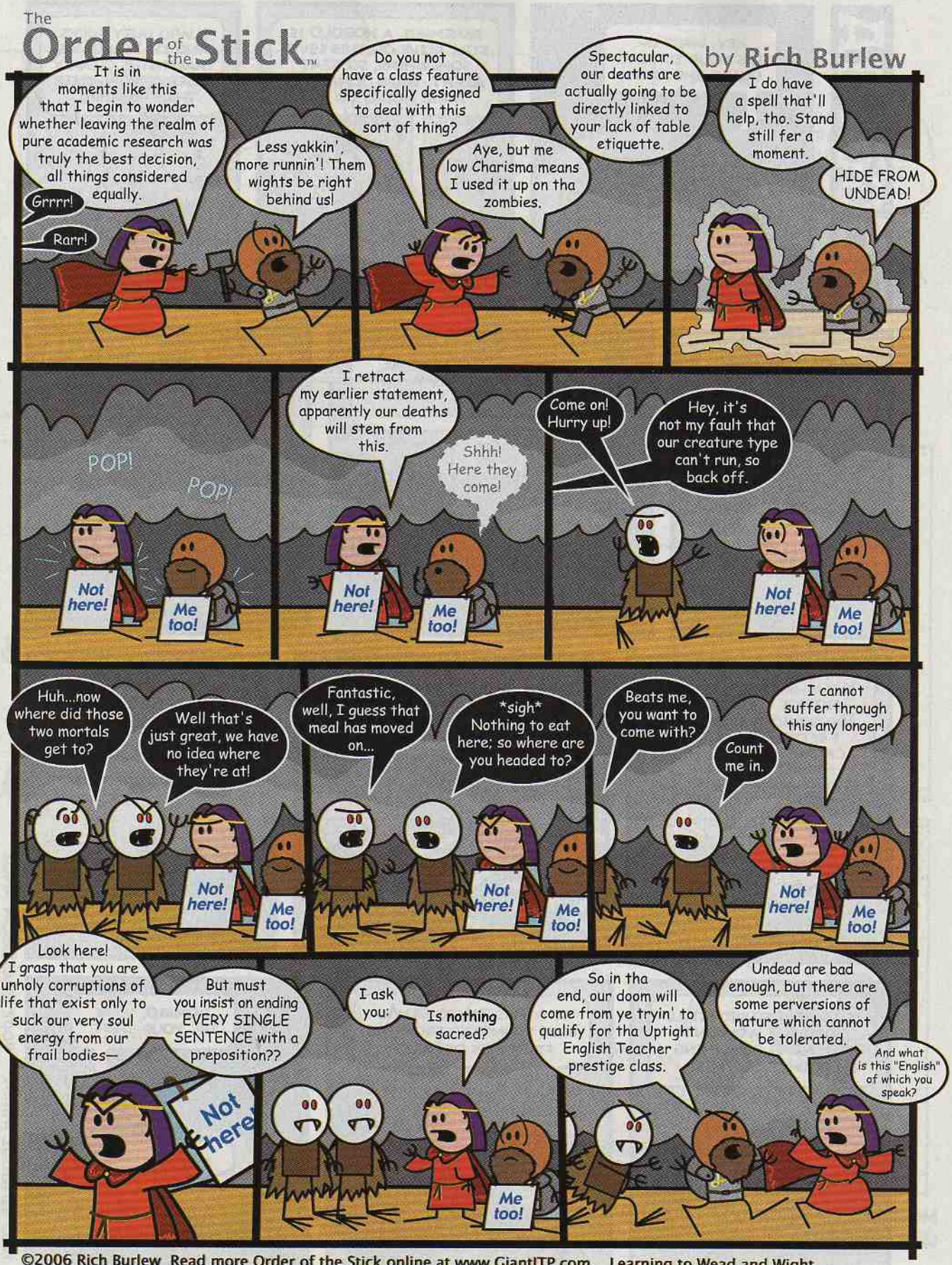
ZOGONIA


KEV, WAKE UP. IT'S YOUR TURN TO GUARD THE PARTY.
REMEMBER, A KOBOLD IS STILL ALIVE ON THIS LEVEL SOMEWHERE, SO STAY ALERT. WAKE DOMATO IN THREE HOURS OR SO.
GUARD DUTY SUCKS. AND I'M TIRED. WE TRAPSMITHS CLEARLY DESERVE MORE SLEEP THAN FIGHTERS.
WHOA, I JUST HAD AN IDEA! THE MOST AWESOME IDEA I EVER HAD!!
ALL I NEED TO DO IS TAKE THIS CHALK AND DRAW TWO BIG CONCENTRIC CIRCLES AROUND THE PARTY...
TAH DAH! A FAKE CIRCLE OF WARDING! THE KOBOLD WILL THINK WE'RE GUARDED BY MAGIC AND WILL STAY AWAY, ALLOWING ME TO SAFELY ENJOY A NAP!
BUT WHAT IF HE DOESN'T NOTICE THE CIRCLE? FOR OBVIOUSNESS' SAKE, I BETTER STICK SOME CANDLES AROUND THE EDGE....LIKE SO.
YEH, THIS LOOKS GREAT. I SHOULD ADD SOME SQUIGGLY SHAPES AND SYMBOLS, TOO... FOR EXTRA AUTHENTICITY.
ABRA-POKUS! BIM! BAM! ZANGO BANGO!
MY RUSE IS COMPLETE!
IF I WAS A STUPID LITTLE KOBOLD, I WOULDN'T STEP NEAR SOMETHING SPOOKY LIKE THIS!
WHY HAS ZANGO BANGO BEEN SUMMONED FROM THE FIREY PITS OF HELL?
DOMATO, WAKE UP. YOUR SHIFT.

TONY MOSELEY © 2006 WWW.ZOGONIA.COM


The Order of the Stick™
by Rich Burlew
It is in moments like this that I begin to wonder whether leaving the realm of pure academic research was truly the best decision, all things considered equally.
Grrrr!
Rarr!
Less yakkin', more runnin'! Them wights be right behind us!
Do you not have a class feature specifically designed to deal with this sort of thing?
Aye, but me low Charisma means I used it up on tha zombies.
Spectacular, our deaths are actually going to be directly linked to your lack of table etiquette.
I do have a spell that'll help, tho. Stand still fer a moment.
HIDE FROM UNDEAD!
POP!
POP!
Not here!
Me too!
I retract my earlier statement, apparently our deaths will stem from this.
Shhh! Here they come!
Come on! Hurry up!
Hey, it's not my fault that our creature type can't run, so back off.
Huh...now where did those two mortals get to?
Well that's just great, we have no idea where they're at!
Fantastic, well, I guess that meal has moved on...
sigh Nothing to eat here; so where are you headed to?
Beats me, you want to come with?
Count me in.
I cannot suffer through this any longer!
Look here! I grasp that you are unholy corruptions of life that exist only to suck our very soul energy from our frail bodies—
But must you insist on ending EVERY SINGLE SENTENCE with a preposition??
Not here!
I ask you:
Is nothing sacred?
So in tha end, our doom will come from ye tryin' to qualify for tha Uptight English Teacher prestige class.
Undead are bad enough, but there are some perversions of nature which cannot be tolerated.
And what is this "English" of which you speak?

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